COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

J. TYLER McCAULEY
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

December 6, 2005

TO: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
                Supervisor Gloria Molina
                Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
                Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
                Supervisor Don Knabe

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley
                Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **MANAGEMENT AUDIT OF THE PROBATION DEPARTMENT**

The Auditor-Controller arranged for a management audit of the Probation Department. Two firms were selected to perform the audit. The firm of Thompson, Cobb, Bazillo & Associates (TCBA) was selected to perform the more traditional management audit and accordingly focused on six areas: strategic planning, linking strategies to operations, organization structure and leadership, automated systems and technology, personnel management, and other audit areas that came to their attention. TCBA made 50 recommendations for improving the overall management of the Department.

The firm Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) was selected to perform an audit of Probation Department's programs to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of those programs. Key areas reviewed included program planning and implementation, best practices and benchmarking, performance measurement and client outcomes, and intra- and inter-agency work processes. CWLA made 50 recommendations for improving adult and juvenile programs. It should be noted that the emphasis of the program audit was on the juvenile arena.

The firms generally worked independently, but coordinated their work in areas of necessary common review.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Thompson, Cobb, Bazillo & Associates Management Audit Findings (TCBA)

Organization Management and Leadership

The TCBA audit of the Probation Department depicts an organization with a management team that does not have an effective management infrastructure as it lacks capabilities in key management areas including strategic planning, performance measurement and organizational management. The audit concluded the Department needs to provide an organizational framework within which individuals can achieve the organization's goals and facilitate effective service delivery and problem solving. TCBA also noted that many Department managers have too many employees reporting directly to them and too many operational responsibilities to effectively provide the leadership needed to prepare the Department for the future.

TCBA recommends the Department provide training in strategic management, performance measurement, and organizational management skills to its management team.

TCBA recognized that the new Chief Probation Officer has filled several management positions with individuals from outside the Department and recommends this practice continue. TCBA believes this is a positive move for the Department because there is a strong need to increase diversity of management professional background and experience including adding highly trained and experienced leaders who have the skills to oversee the changes needed to strengthen the Department's organizational structure.

Automated Systems and Technology

The auditor observed that the Department has made progress in using technology to improve efficiency and support customer services. A noteworthy example is the KIOSK based Report-in-System. The Department also has planned strategies to move all information systems to a WEB based architecture to allow easier access and sharing of information across County agencies, other service providers, etc.

TCBA auditors recommend the Probation Department further consider the use of technologies to facilitate aggregation and analysis of data contained in disparate systems both as an interim strategy to achieve better data integration, and for longer term, as a management analysis and reporting tool. The Department also needs to consider conducting a requirements and capacity analysis of the required data network to ensure that it will have sufficient capacity to support the planned deployment of the newer network intensive technologies, and consider using imaging software and workflow engine to streamline and improve responsiveness of other complex functional and administrative processes within the Department.

Personnel Management

The auditor observed that the Department could strengthen its personnel management practices in various ways including consolidating the recruitment, outreach, and hiring functions in the Personnel Division; fully implementing its initiative to move toward open competitive recruitment and selection for key Department positions; and strengthening background investigations prior to hiring employee candidates. Additionally, the audit recommended working to bring training of newly sworn and newly promoted staff into compliance with requirements; developing an integrated, agency-wide, training system for both sworn and civilian staff to develop specific strategies to improve staff morale.

The audit noted the potential for greater coordination among the Internal Affairs Unit in the Administrative Bureau, the Special Investigations Unit, internal investigations conducted by each individual bureau, and the Department's Office of Affirmative Action Compliance. The auditor recommends consolidating the current Internal Investigations Unit, Special Enforcement Unit, and Discipline Unit into a Professional Standards Unit reporting directly to the Chief Probation Officer. Finally, the Department lacks the authority and ability to conduct investigations into criminal activity involving Department employees. The auditor recommends the Department enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Sheriff or District Attorney to conduct criminal investigations that would typically be investigated by local law enforcement agencies.

Child Welfare League of America Audit Findings (CWLA)

CWLA concluded that the sheer size of the Probation Department and its operations present enormous challenges to delivering a performance that meets the expectations of various stakeholders in Los Angeles County. They also concluded though that there is much which can be done to meet these challenges and the expectations of the Los Angeles community with the efforts of many individuals in both leadership and line positions in the Department who are committed to providing quality probation services.

The themes of CWLA's recommendations are captured in recommendation No. 1 which states that the Probation Department should develop a multi-year, comprehensive action plan, including the principles of implementing evidence-based practices, a strong statement of desired client outcomes, and a system of performance measurement that reinforces the use of evidence-based practices and the achievement of desire client outcomes.

Strong emphasis on performance measurement, client outcomes, and program evaluation is a theme that runs through many of the recommendations. Other themes in the recommendations include addressing workload issues, resource deficiencies, probation officer contact with probationers, and greater attention to making the Department's efforts evidence-based where applicable. Many recommendations direct attention to the need for a stronger partnership with community-based organizations

along with concentrating efforts geographically to improve how the Department delivers services. Finally, some recommendations call for additional study (e.g., the camps, etc.).

Program Planning and Implementation

CWLA noted the Department has laudable mission and vision statements that focus on a combination of goals, "promote and enhance public safety, ensure victims' rights, and facilitate the positive behavior change of adult and juvenile probationers." However, the challenges of caseload size, resources, and the Department's limited focus on rehabilitation in its performance measurements have limited incorporating the mission into daily operations.

The consultants note that another limiting factor for the Department is the absence of a comprehensive plan for its operations. They observe, however, that there are many references in the strategic planning documents to developing plans to improve various aspects of probation functions, but the strategies do not consistently link best programs or practices to meet the goals set out in the mission and vision statements.

Implementation – Resources and Service Delivery

CWLA notes that in terms of human resources, some caseloads are high in both the adult and juvenile arenas. The Department is not able to demonstrate that it meets its requirements for monthly face-to-face contacts which may be a function of caseload size. CWLA recommends determining ideal workload measures to provide a basis for analysis of caseload size to allow the Department to clearly articulate its capacity to supervise probationers.

In addition, CWLA points out there is no objective resource inventory and analysis of resources available for adult and juvenile probationers making it difficult to gather data on service needs, availability, and delivery. Also, CWLA found there is a lack of program resources in the juvenile arena, particularly pronounced in areas of mental health, education, substance abuse, and home-based services. They also noted there is a strong consensus among stakeholders inside and outside the Department that there is a need for more community resources. In addition, Department staff have a limited awareness of the resources that do exist within the community for probationers. The Department's employees in both adult and juvenile probation arenas who responded to the employee survey indicated the Department should coordinate with community-based organizations in defined geographic areas to target the needs of juveniles in the area.

Best Practices

CWLA observed Probation Department either operates or contracts with a wide variety of programs intended to reduce the future criminal behaviors of those in its charge. However, few of these programs have undergone rigorous evaluation to determine their effectiveness, and thereby reinforce the use of best practices or evidenced-based practices in the Department's operations. The Department has moved some probationers into programs that are evidence-based and has initiated training programs to support the awareness of best practices and skill development of staff in the areas of assessment, adolescence development, cognitive-behavior therapy and multi-system therapy, but does not have a comprehensive plan for how it will incorporate evidence-based practices throughout its probation services.

CWLA commended the Department's recent implementation of a validated assessment instrument, the Los Angeles Risk and Resiliency Checklist for juvenile probationers, a best practice that is particularly promising and can serve as the foundation for improving service delivery and client outcomes.

The Camps

CWLA conducted a limited on-site review of the camps to determine whether there was evidence to support stakeholders' anecdotal reports of concerns regarding the treatment and handling of camp residents by the staff, disciplinary procedures, programming, case management, and the availability of treatment resources. CWLA found evidence to support the concerns of stakeholders that warrant further study.

CWLA found the stated mission and goals of the camp program are inconsistent with programming and treatment practices at the camps. In addition, current staffing levels are inadequate to achieve the stated goals of the camp program, a condition which is compounded by the methods used to schedule staff. Also, deficiencies in the training of staff exist that do not support the camps' goals and can affect the safety of the camps. Other findings included the education program in the camps is not integrated well with the overall camp experience and goals; and there are limited evaluation data regarding the effectiveness of the camp program in terms of its utility for particular offenders, length of confinement, or cost.

Performance Measurement and Client Outcomes

In the consultant's opinion, the achievement of successful outcomes depend, first, on a careful identification of what outcomes are sought, second, an examination and addressing the factors that affect achievement, and three, the development of a measurement system to document achievement.

The Department routinely measures work process and activities with limited focus on client outcomes. The Department has some evidence of a focus on client outcomes in its practice, but a limited review of juvenile cases suggests that the achievement of client outcomes does not drive the case activity. CWLA believes the Department could change its culture and improve outcomes for probationers by giving a strong focus to the measurement of client outcomes. In this way, probation officers would become more focused on the achievement of those outcomes in addition to the successful performance of work processes.

CWLA observed this lack of focus on client outcomes is also evident in the Department's contracting with community-based organizations. CWLA believes that if the Department were to focus its measurement on the achievement of successful client outcomes, it would be able to move from just purchasing service to also purchasing outcomes from its providers.

We thank TCBA and CWLA for their efforts on the Probation management audit and Probation Department managers and employees for their cooperation throughout the audit.

If your Board has any questions, please call me or your staff may call Maria Oms at (213) 974-8303.

JTM:MO:raj

Enclosures

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
    Paul Higa, Director, Probation Department
    Dr. Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W., Director, Department of Mental Health
    David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, Department of Children and Family Services
    Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
    Public Information
    Audit Committee
    Justice Committee

County of Los Angeles

2004-05 Management Audit of the
LOS ANGELES COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT

Presented to:
J. Tyler McCauley
Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller

November 2005

TCBA

November 28, 2005

Mr. J. Tyler McCauley
Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller
500 West Temple Street, Room 525
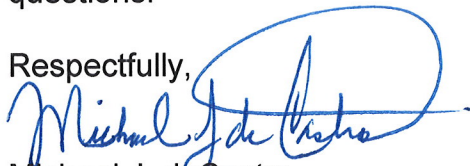Los Angeles, CA 90012-2766

Dear Mr. McCauley,

Thompson, Cobb, Bazilio & Associates, PC is pleased to present the attached report on our management audit of the Los Angeles County Probation Department (LACPD). We believe the recommendations contained in this report, which have been agreed to by LACPD management, will improve the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the LACPD, if implemented.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation for the cooperation provided to us throughout the audit by LACPD management and staff. LACPD management's willingness to embrace the recommendations contained in this report is a positive first step towards continued operational improvement.

Please feel free to call me anytime at 310 792-7001 if you should have any questions.

Respectfully,

Michael J. deCastro
Principal

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS – Continued

Appendices (Under Separate Cover):
    Los Angeles County Probation Department 2005 Management Survey Report
    Los Angeles County Probation Department 2005 Employee Survey Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller engaged Thompson, Cobb, Bazilio & Associates, PC to perform a management audit of the Los Angeles County Probation Department (the "Department") to assess whether the Department is achieving its mission effectively and efficiently. The scope of this management audit focused on evaluating the following six areas: 1) Strategic Planning, 2) Linking Strategies to Operations, 3) Organization Structure and Leadership, 4) Automated Systems and Technology, 5) Personnel Management, and 6) Other Audit Areas.

Below we provide a brief summary of the recommended improvements in each of the six areas audited. Further detailed discussion is provided in the body of this report.

Strategic Planning (See pages 12 - 23)

The Auditor-Controller in its Phase I Management Audit of the Probation Department completed in October of 1998 recommended the Probation Department initiate a strategic planning process and a strategic plan. In response to this recommendation, the Probation Department developed a Department Strategic Plan, completing it in August of 2000. This strategic plan modified the Department's mission, and established a vision statement and core values.

Although the Probation Department should be commended for developing a strategic plan, we found that the Department's strategic planning lacks many of the basic elements of comprehensive strategic planning. The recommendations for improving the Department's strategic planning efforts include 1) establishing clear and meaningful strategic goals for the Probation Department, 2) improving the link between the Strategic Plan and Strategic Maps, or from one year's Strategic Map to the next, 3) engaging mid-management or Department employees in identifying issues or developing effective strategies during the strategic planning effort, 4) considering developing a comprehensive strategic planning approach that includes assessments of key trends; internal resources, capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses; identification and assessment of key constituencies and clients; review of best practices and industry leaders; and development and analysis of alternative approaches and strategies, 5) ensuring that substantial changes in strategic direction or new strategic initiatives that occur are implemented as part of the Department's strategic planning process, and 6) considering establishing a Strategic Management/Quality Assurance function and capability within the Department's Executive Office and provide it with the resources necessary to develop a meaningful strategic plan and develop mechanisms to ensure effective implementation.

Linking Strategy to Operations (See pages 24 – 36)

Linking strategic decisions or goals and specific strategies to the operations of an organization is the most difficult step and the place most strategic planning or strategic

management efforts fail. To ensure successful implementation, strategies must be specifically assigned, with implementation timeframes clearly defined. Oversight to ensure accountability is also important.

Our management audit found the Department could strengthen its linkages between its strategic initiatives and the operations of the Department by 1) developing an implementation action plan for each key strategic initiative that clearly defines specific implementation steps, clearly assigns responsibility for implementation, identifies resources required for implementation, and establishes the implementation timeline, 2) linking strategic initiatives directly to the Department's budget and resource planning, 3) developing a Strategic Plan communications element to identify specific actions to be taken to clearly communicate the Department's goals/priorities to the entire management team and staff, and 4) increasing involvement in strategy development and action planning by middle management and staff. Moreover, the Department should consider reviewing its performance measurement system and developing a hierarchy of performance indicators based on clear and consistent Department goals.

Organization Structure and Leadership (See pages 37 – 50)

An organization's structure should provide a framework of functional areas within which individuals can achieve the organization's goals. An effective organization structure clearly reflects the priorities of the organization, facilitates effective service delivery and problem solving, ensures consistency of direction and management control, minimizes obstacles and barriers to performance, and stimulates a culture of shared accomplishment and teamwork.

Our management audit found that the Department should 1) consider providing training in strategic planning, performance measurement, and organizational management to its management team as well as acquiring management personnel from outside the Department with those skills, 2) continue its efforts to strengthen its management team by adding managers with diverse professional backgrounds and experience, 3) should consider re-organizing to provide a more appropriate and consistent span of control, improve communication and coordination, and provide for unity of command to the extent possible, 4) consider combining the Department's internal investigative functions within the Office of the Chief Probation Officer, and 5) consider placing Service Managers and subsidiary functions at each of the Department's detention and treatment facilities under the authority of the Facility Managers while maintaining a central coordination function.

Automated Systems and Technology (See pages 51 – 60)

The review of the Probation Department's use of automated systems and technology was analyzed in the context of how well the Information Technology Bureau supported the key responsibilities and strategies of the Probation Department.

Our management audit found that the Probation Department should 1) consider the use of Data Warehousing and Geographical Information Systems technologies to facilitate the aggregation and analysis of data contained in disparate systems both as an interim strategy to achieve better data integration, and for the longer term, as a management analysis and reporting tool, 2) consider developing a formal replacement schedule for all equipment to ensure that adequate funds are available annually to continually refresh the technology base, 3) consider conducting a requirements and capacity analysis of the required data network to ensure that it will have sufficient capacity to support the planned deployment of the newer network intensive technologies, 4) consider giving a high priority to the hiring of personnel approved in the 2005-2006 Fiscal Year Budget to develop and monitor security plans, 5) consider the use of additional technologies such as Interactive Voice Response using the more prevalent public phone network to allow access to information and services where appropriate, 6) consider using the PEDMS imaging software and workflow engine to streamline and improve the responsiveness of other complex functional and administrative processes within the Department, and 7) consider funding the development of course materials for the E-Learning solutions training program.

Personnel Management (See pages 61 – 77)

The Probation Department's effectiveness is dependent on the effectiveness of its personnel that deliver the Department's services. Effectively managing and motivating these personnel is critical to the Department's success. Our management audit of personnel management focused on the following 8 personnel areas:

- ✓ Recruiting and Selecting Personnel
- ✓ Background Investigations
- ✓ Internal Investigations
- ✓ Training Personnel
- ✓ Motivating Personnel
- ✓ Evaluating Personnel Performance
- ✓ Promoting Personnel
- ✓ Managing Personnel Turnover and Succession

Our management audit of personnel management found that the Department could strengthen its personnel management practices by 1) consolidating the recruitment, outreach, and hiring functions in the Personnel Division; enhancing targeted regional recruitment; and establishing the recruitment function as a formal organizational unit with a designated budget and staffing level, 2) fully implementing its initiative to move toward open competitive recruitment and selection for key Department positions, 3) strengthening background investigations prior to hiring employment candidates including expanded criminal history checks, credit history checks of candidates, drug testing of candidates, and polygraph examination of candidates, 4) consolidating the current Internal Investigations Unit, Special Enforcement Unit, and Discipline Unit into a Professional Standards Unit reporting directly to the Chief Probation Officer, 5) entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Los Angeles County Sheriff or the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office to conduct criminal investigations of Probation

Department personnel that would typically be investigated by local law enforcement agencies, 6) working to bring training of newly sworn and newly promoted staff into compliance with requirements, 7) developing an integrated, agency-wide, training system for both sworn and civilian staff, 8) establishing a working group of employees to develop specific strategies to improve the morale of Department employees, 9) increasing its use of management-staff communication tools (i.e. newsletters, general staff e-mails, regularly scheduled management-staff meetings, etc.) to help improve the flow of information regarding specific issues related to employee morale concerns, 10) forming a working committee to examine the program and personnel management systems and to develop specific recommendations to the Executive Leadership Team for enhancements to the current personnel performance evaluation process, 11) restricting changes to Appraisals of Promotability to those that can be justified based on factual information and consistent with established criteria, 12) establishing a process to track, analyze, and address employee turnover to ensure that the reasons for high turnover situations are properly addressed, and 13) developing an up-to-date succession plan.

Other Audit Areas (See pages 78 – 81)

Other management audit areas reviewed included the Department's Safety Program, Grants Management and Public Information. Our audit of these areas found that the Department could improve its operations in these areas by 1) updating and implementing its injury illness and prevention program. Emphasis should be placed on standardizing procedures for reporting incidents, designating safety coordinators at each location, and establishing proper reporting of unsafe conditions, 2) developing specific written policies and procedures as to how the grants process functions and operates within the Department, and 3) moving the Public Information function to the Office of the Chief Probation Officer, giving it the authority to oversee and coordinate all Department public information efforts, and providing it the resources necessary to be effective.

INTRODUCTION

The Los Angeles County Probation Department was established with the enactment of California's first Probation laws in 1903 and is headquartered in Downey California. The Department, which has since become the largest probation department in the world, promotes public safety, ensures victims rights and facilitates a positive change in both adult and juvenile probationers. As the leader of the Department, the Chief Probation Officer has jurisdiction over the entire County, including all of the cities within its borders.

Currently funded by a net appropriation in excess of $530 million, the Department provides an extensive range of services through the efforts of its more than 5,000 employees deployed in over 50 locations throughout the County. The Department serves all the superior courts of the County. Some of its primary services include recommending sanctions to the court regarding court orders, operating correctional institutions, incarcerating delinquents, assisting victims and providing corrective assistance to individuals in conflict with the law.

The Department's mission is to promote and enhance public safety, ensure victims' rights, and facilitate the positive behavior change of both adult and juvenile probationers. To accomplish its mission, the Department has adopted the following core values, which it considers fundamental to its success. These core values are:

- ➢ Unity: We work together, as one Department, to accomplish our mission;
- ➢ Respect: We take personal responsibility for treating employees, probationers, victims, and all others with respect and fairness in all interactions;
- ➢ Integrity: We commit ourselves to maintaining the public's trust and creating public value by adhering to the moral, ethical, judicial and legislative code that govern the operations of our department;
- ➢ Diversity: We appreciate the cultural differences of the communities we serve and the value gained from having a workforce that represents their vast diversity;
- ➢ Communication: We foster and support an environment where information is openly shared and ideas are freely discussed;
- ➢ Innovation: We promote an empowered environment in which staff members are encouraged to explore new ideas that foster positive change; and
- ➢ Quality Service: We will provide a work product of the highest quality through continuous measurement, assessment, and improvement.

Over the past several years, the Department has been impacted by budget cutbacks that have negatively impacted operations and the effective delivery of key services. However, a recent change in leadership at the Chief Probation Officer level has resulted in a new opportunity to examine the issues confronting the Department and create innovative and creative solutions for the future.

Probation Department Organization

The Probation Department is organized into "Bureaus" with each Bureau focusing on a broad area of probation services and responsibilities. The eight core Bureaus are: Management Services Bureau, Administrative Services Bureau, Residential Treatment Services Bureau, Detention Services Bureau, Juvenile Field Services Bureau, Juvenile Special Services Bureau, Adult Field Services Bureau, and Information Technology Bureau. Each Bureau is led by a Bureau Chief. Within each Bureau are divisions, which are responsible for the Department's services and programs. LACPD staff are based in the Department headquarters in Downey or one of the separate facilities such as field offices, juvenile detention centers and residential treatment facilities located throughout the County. The exhibit on the following page shows the Department's organizational structure.

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES PROBATION DEPARTMENT

pm65s (Rev. 6/8/05)

Chief Probation Officer — Higa

Ombudsman — Gama

Quality Enhancement Team — Davies

Chief Deputy — Vacant

Affirmative Action — Jimenez

Management Services Bureau — Jones
- Consultant — Sosa
- Facilities Planning — Buitrago
- Field Support Services — Soliz/Kellogg
- Inventory & Warehouse Operations — Soliz
- Procurement — Imperial
- Safety, Security & Emergency Preparedness — Garcia
- Communications — Stutenroth
- Camp Support Services - Challenger — Alexander
- Camp Support Services — Kornoff
- Juvenile Hall Support Services - BJNJH — Peinado
- Juvenile Hall Support Services - CJH — Fields
- Juvenile Hall Support Services – LPJH — Minnis

Administrative Services Bureau — Smythe
- Budget & Fiscal — Millar / Munoz/Cooper / Lambertson
- Contract Services — Young / Sahagun
- Personnel Services — Vacant / Vacant/Dederick
- Staff Training — Schryver
- TANF/Grievance Office — Teate
- Contract Monitoring — Donnell
- Internal Affairs — Peters (Acting)

Residential Treatment Services Bureau — Sanchez (Acting)
- Consultant — Duke
- Special Assistant — Nieto
- Camp Headquarters — Duke

CAMPS
Regional Director-1 CMYC (Oversight)
- McNair &
- Resnik
- Scobee
- Onizuka
- Jarvis
- Mendenhall
- Munz
- Smith & SHU
- Security & Crew
- Long
- Lares
- Bass
- Gutierrez
- Trask
- McClendon
- Doyle
- Moreno
- Vangor
- Bass

Regional Director-2 (Oversight) (SGV) - Vartanian
- Afflerbaugh
- DKC
- Gonzales
- Holton
- Kilpatrick
- Miller
- Paige
- Rockey
- Routh
- Scott
- Landrum
- Varela
- Ufondu
- Levy
- Cormier
- Fenton
- Crowe
- Rojas
- Trejo
- Owen
- Porter
- Scudder

Detention Services Bureau — Alexander
- Quality Improvement/DOJ — Barrett
- Consultant — Grkinich
- CJH — Bingham / Aceves/Roque / Rubin/Williams
- LPJH — Carroll / Cooke/McWhorter / Garcia/Valeriano
- BJNJH — Anhalt / Heath / Lopez/Woods
- IDC — Evans
- Transportation — Rogers

Adult Field Services Bureau — Davies

Juvenile Field Services Bureau — Snapp
- Crenshaw
- ESFV/Van Nuys
- Firestone
- Foothill
- Long Beach
- Pomona
- Rio Hondo
- Riverview
- Santa Monica
- CAI-ASCOT
- Central Records
- NTO-PROP 36
- PTS
- Jeanneret
- Johnson
- Hubbard-Johns
- Yoder
- Leeds
- Edwards
- Diaz
- Weathersby
- Watson
- Clark
- Carruthers
- Wilson
- McCormick
- A. Valley/VAL
- KJC
- Harbor
- NELIC
- Oversight
- Regional
- Central
- Placement/Q.A.
- I.L.P.
- J.F. Oversight
- Davis
- Thomas
- Tobey
- Le Flore
- Leone
- Cooper
- New
- Ritchie
- Mitchell
- Harada

Juvenile Special Services Bureau — Imara
- JJCPA-Oversight — Cotton
- JJCPA CLUSTER 1 — Jimenez
- JJCPA CLUSTER 2 — Ivory
- JJCPA CLUSTER 3 — Vinetz
- JJCPA CLUSTER 4 — Sims
- JJCPA CLUSTER 5 — Walker
- Centinela — Rose
- ELA-SEU — Nelson
- Op. Read — Stanley
- ELA Gang — Dodson
- SGV — Provencio
- South Central — Cichy
- LTFSS/SPA — Vigil
- SOCMH/NCCD — Gordon
- SEU — Nelson
- COMNET
- CLEAR
- DISARM
- CEASE FIRE
- CCTP — McCovey

Information Technology Bureau — vacant

Division Chief — Nazarbegian
- Asst. Division Chief — Castagna
- Hardware and Software — Nguyen
- Hardware and Data Center — Billings
- IT Customer Service — Salas

Asst. Division Chief — Rodriguez
- Juvenile Systems — Van
- PC Applications Development — Martin
- Intranet Internet Div. — Johnson
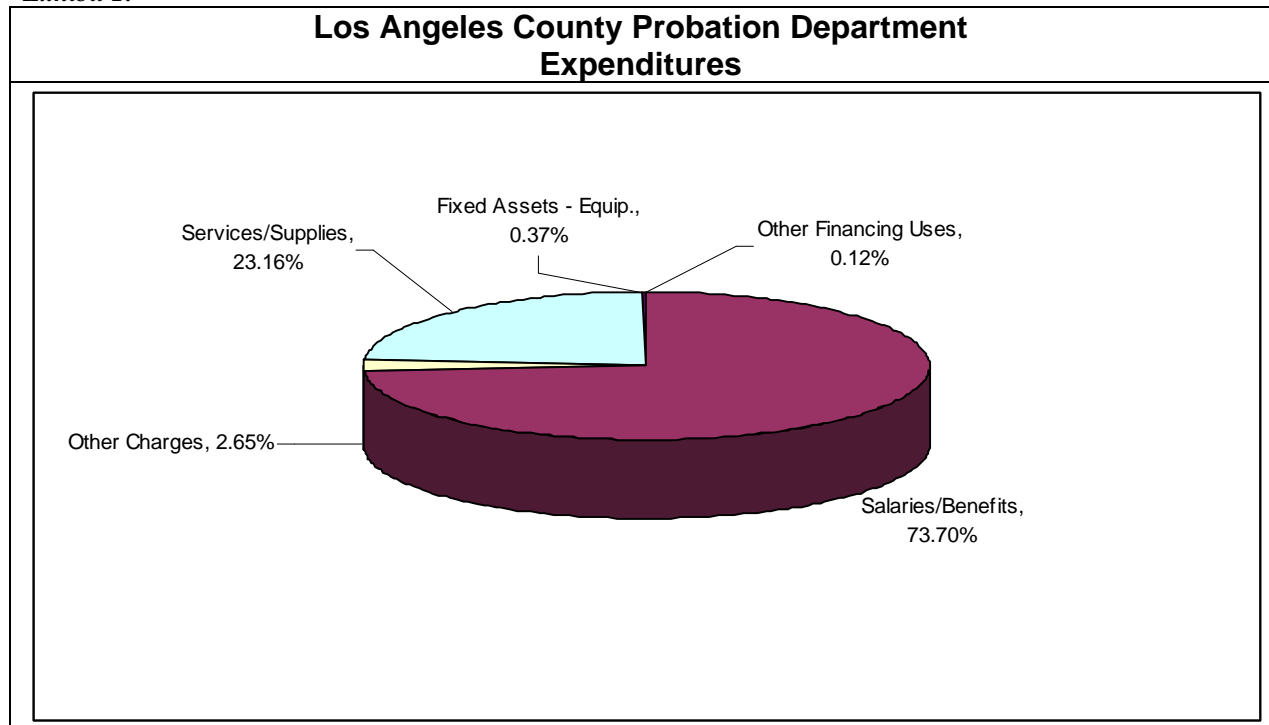- Adult Systems — Jackson

Staffing

The LACPD has 5,167 budgeted positions. The Department is among the national leaders in the correctional field with over two-thirds of its employees engaged in some professional aspect of probation work, such as Deputy Probation Officers, Pretrial Release Investigators, Detention Service Officers or Supervisors. Its employees staff the more than 50 work locations consisting of juvenile detention centers, residential treatment facilities and field services offices.
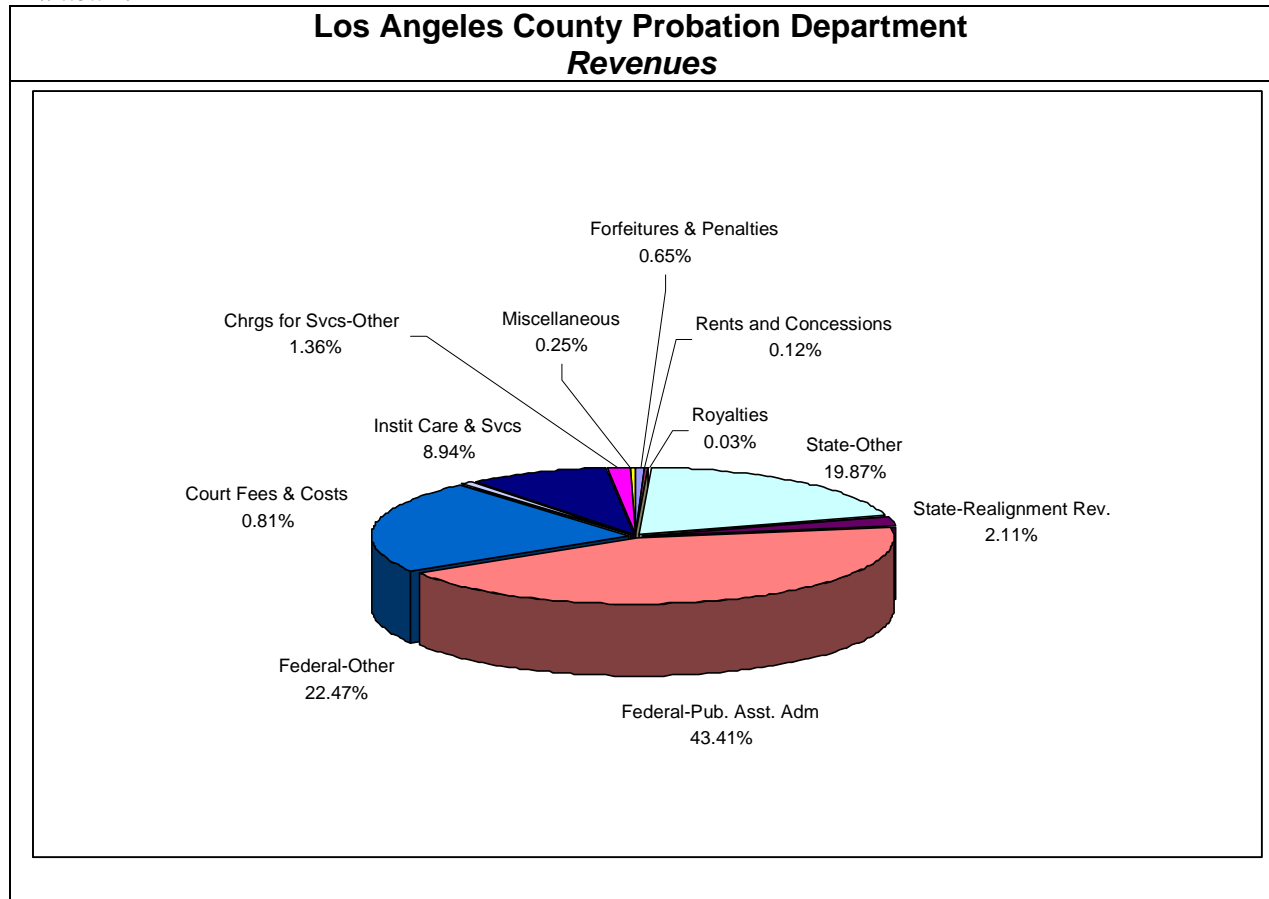
Financing

The LACPD has a budget of approximately $535 million. The following exhibit shows the breakdown of this amount:

Exhibit 1:

Los Angeles County Probation Department Expenditures

Fixed Assets - Equip., 0.37%

Services/Supplies, 23.16%

Other Financing Uses, 0.12%

Other Charges, 2.65%

Salaries/Benefits, 73.70%

Of total proposed expenditures for FY 05-06, $332.3 million or 62% is covered by the County General Fund and $12.1 million is accounted for as Intra-fund Transfers. The remaining $191.1 is recovered through revenues. The following exhibit shows a breakdown of these revenue sources:

Exhibit 2:

Los Angeles County Probation Department
Revenues

Forfeitures & Penalties
0.65%

Chrgs for Svcs-Other
1.36%

Miscellaneous
0.25%

Rents and Concessions
0.12%

Instit Care & Svcs
8.94%

Royalties
0.03%

State-Other
19.87%

Court Fees & Costs
0.81%

State-Realignment Rev.
2.11%

Federal-Other
22.47%

Federal-Pub. Asst. Adm
43.41%

Depending on the program, fee levels are set by the agency, the Board of Supervisors through ordinance or by the State Legislature through statute.

Scope

The Auditor-Controller hired Thompson, Cobb, Bazilio & Associates (TCBA) to perform a management audit to determine whether the Department is efficiently and effectively achieving its mission, and that it is executing its core values, which are fundamental to its success. To properly make this assessment, the scope of this audit is intended to review the overall status and effectiveness of the Department's current management structure and operations. The scope of our audit included the following areas:

1. Strategic Planning

2. Administrative Processes to Link Strategies to Operations

3. Organization Structure and Leadership

4. Automated Systems and Technology

5. Personnel Management

6. Other Audit Areas

Standards Used

TCBA conducted this management audit in accordance with general and performance audit standards regarding qualifications, independence, due professional care, quality control, fieldwork, and reporting prescribed by the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) in Government Auditing Standards (Yellow Book) on performing performance audits.

Methods Used

Phase I – Audit Survey

During the Preliminary Survey the TCBA engagement team gained a detailed and thorough understanding of how the Probation Department operates. The focus was on the management and administration of the Department. Data gathered consisted of documents, reports, policies and procedures, and other relevant information. Interviews were also conducted with members of the Probation Department management team.

The survey phase had three primary objectives:

1)   Ensure all parties have a clear understanding of, and agree with, the scope of the project.
2)   Obtain an understanding and prepare a profile of the Department, including mission, goals, objectives, regulations, and business processes.
3)   Recommend a revised scope and/or revised objectives, if needed, to include areas where potential problems may exist, or to exclude areas where additional effort is not warranted.

TCBA's profile of the Department was based on questionnaires, interviews, workplace observations, flowcharts, existing documentation and comparisons to other organizations.   TCBA developed a detailed understanding of the programs and functions, and key business processes that support the core programs and functions. From this understanding, TCBA developed the detailed audit plan, which was approved by the Auditor-Controller.

Phase II – Detailed Audit Phase

The detailed audit phase applied the audit plan developed under Phase I to the five areas of focus; Strategic Planning, Administrative Processes to Link Strategies to Operations, Organization Structure and Leadership, Automated Systems and

Technology and Personnel Management. Specific audit procedures were developed and applied for each area of focus.

The detailed audit phase was conducted using the following methods:
- ✓ Obtaining and reviewing key Probation Department documents and information
- ✓ Individual interviews with Probation Department managers
- ✓ Development and administration of a survey of Probation Department Managers
- ✓ Development and administration of a survey of Probation Department employees
- ✓ Development and administration of a "Best Practices" survey of other large Probation Departments
- ✓ Conducting focus group meetings with Probation Department employees
- ✓ Conducting site visits to Probation Department facilities

At the conclusion of Phase II, TCBA presented preliminary findings and recommendations to the Auditor-Controller project managers as well as LACPD executive management.

Phase III – Reporting Phase

In this phase, TCBA prepared a draft final report, conducted an exit conference with LACPD and Auditor-Controller staff and finalized the report.

1. STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it. When the strategic plan is effectively linked to operations all segments of the organization have a clear understanding of the purpose of the organization, the strategies being implemented to achieve that purpose, and the progress being achieved.

An effective strategic planning process includes the following key elements:

✓ ***Identification and assessment of key trends*** – including demographic, social, legal, regulatory, and technological changes that could positively or negatively impact the Probation Department's ability to accomplish its mission.

✓ ***Assessment of internal resources, capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses*** – including financial capacity, facilities, human resources, and technological advantages. Strengths can include distinctive competencies, areas where the organization is seen as a leader, and unique external relationships. Weaknesses may include deficiencies in resources, skills, or capabilities. Workload, in terms of current demands and projected future demand should be identified and analyzed. Additionally, understanding employee attitudes in terms of their work environment, communication, management support and fairness, and their motivation and morale levels are important to understand.

✓ ***Identification and assessment of key constituencies / clients*** – including efforts to identify and understand the specific expectations and issues of constituents and clients. This analysis needs to focus on four key questions: What are the constituents' and clients' priorities? How satisfied are they with current services or products? What are their service or quality expectations? What concerns or issues do they have?

✓ ***Review of best practices or industry leaders*** - to identify alternative approaches or strategies that could potentially be implemented by the Probation Department.

✓ ***Development and analysis of alternative approaches and strategies*** – including the search for, and analysis of, alternatives to achieving goals and objectives. This includes estimating the likely benefits, cost, and feasibility of alternatives.

✓ ***Adoption of a clear, concise, vision and mission, goals and objectives*** – The vision should establish the organization's view of the future. It should be clear, concise, and easily generate commitment and enthusiasm. Goals and objectives must be clearly related to the vision and mission. They must be explicit, precise, and measurable. They must also be strategic rather than operational in nature, focusing on what the organization is to be accomplishing

(e.g., Protect the public from persons on Probation re-offending), not on how the organization is doing it (e.g., Improve the training of Department staff).

✓ ***Adoption of a broad range of strategies*** – including:

➢ ***Technical Change Strategies*** - changing the way services are provided and an organization's output is produced. These changes occur through process reengineering or similar approaches.

➢ ***Structural Change Strategies*** - altering the structure of specific jobs or modifying organizational roles or relationships. Combining similar or dependant functions, changing the number or reporting relationship of departments or divisions, or otherwise changing organization structure are examples of this type of change strategy.

➢ ***Managerial Change Strategies*** - changing management policies or practices, such as changing reward systems or the relationship between management and labor. Examples include broad banding a personnel classification system, implementing results based reward systems, or involving employees in decision making.

➢ ***People Change Strategies*** - actively engaging the people working in an organization, through changing their attitudes or beliefs, or upgrading their skills and capabilities.

In this phase of the management audit we evaluated the Probation Department's strategic planning approach and efforts. Consistent with the Scope of Work defined by the Request for Proposals we focused on the following areas:

✓ Clear vision of the Department's direction
✓ Consistency with Board policies
✓ Consideration of trends
✓ Consideration of needs and concerns of Department employees, stakeholders, and partners
✓ Promotion of best-practices and state-of-the-art approaches
✓ Documentation of planning processes and results
✓ Re-evaluation and modification of plans and integration of short-term directives and changes

Probation Department's Strategic Planning

Finding 1: The Probation Department developed a strategic plan, and develops an annual strategic map. Both are consistent with the mission, vision, and program goals of the County Strategic Plan, and present a clear and well understood mission for the Department.

The Probation Department has developed a clear and easily understood mission statement and communicated that mission throughout the Department. In our survey of

Probation Department employees a large majority of employees responded they understand the Department's mission (91%) and understand how their jobs fit into the Department's mission (89%). Most Probation Department employees (85%) also were familiar with the Department's Strategic Plan. Management of the Probation Department feel similarly positive, with 86% agreeing the Department's vision and mission are clear.

Probation Department Strategic Plan

The Auditor-Controller in its Phase I Management Audit completed in October of 1998 recommended the Probation Department initiate a strategic planning process and a strategic plan. Additional recommendations included developing an annual business plan for each Bureau to serve as annual planning tools.

The Probation Department developed a Department Strategic Plan, completing it in August of 2000. This strategic plan modified the Department's mission, and established a vision statement and core values.

The Probation Department Strategic Plan is organized around the organizational goals established in the County Strategic Plan – Service Excellence, Organizational Effectiveness, Fiscal Integrity, and Workforce Excellence.

The Strategic Plan established a series of thirty-one strategies, which defined improvements in the Department's services or operations. An example strategy is to "Enhance the Department's ability to provide services to both juvenile and adult probationers with substance abuse problems." For each of these strategies a series of objectives outlined specific actions to be taken to achieve the objective. An example objective is to "Implement a comprehensive substance abuse plan that connects probationers with substance abuse problems to services."

Expected outcomes and measurement criteria were also defined for each strategy. The expected outcomes for the above strategy are "decreased substance abuse among all probationers" and "reduced rate of crime by offenders who received substance abuse services." The measurement criteria included the "percent of dirty tests," and the "percent of probationers re-arrested for drug offenses."

Probation Department Annual Strategic Map

In addition to the Department Strategic Plan, the Department develops an annual "Strategic Map". The Strategic Map is also organized around the County's organizational goals, and additional programmatic goals – Children and Families' Well-Being, Community Services, Health and Mental Health, and Public Safety.

Under each of the above organizational goals the current Strategic Map is a series of "strategies." Examples include "Replace all interim electronic data processing systems with PCMS" and "Educate all Probation managers regarding proper procurement

protocol." For each of these strategies there are a series of "objectives" that are essentially actions to be taken to implement each strategy.

Recommendations to Improve the Strategic Planning Process

Although the Probation Department should be commended for developing a strategic plan and an annual strategic map, the Department's strategic planning lacks many of the basic elements of comprehensive strategic planning. These elements, and recommendations for improving the Department's strategic planning efforts, are discussed in the following sections.

Clear and Consistent Department Goals

Finding 2: The Probation Department's Strategic Plan and Annual Strategic Map do not establish clear and meaningful strategic goals for the Probation Department.

One of the basic purposes of strategic planning is to clearly identify and communicate the top priorities or goals for the organization. As stated previously, the Department's mission is clear and well understood by Department employees. However, the Department's priorities and direction are less well understood.

The Probation Department's Strategic Plan and Annual Strategic Map are basically compilations of projects or tasks to be completed by the Department. The Plan and Maps provide little or no indication of what value completing these tasks and projects will provide.

Meaningful and effective goals define and communicate the value to the public that is provided by the Department's activities, and what the Department intends to accomplish over the long term. Typically, goals should be focused on outcomes outside of the Department itself. For the Probation Department strategic goals may include:

- ✓ Reducing the number of crimes committed by probationers by providing effective supervision
- ✓ Improving the ability of the Courts to make informed decisions by providing accurate, clear, and timely reports
- ✓ Improving the ability of probationers to function effectively in society by providing educational and intervention services
- ✓ Providing a safe and secure environment for minors in detention.

The clearest statement of what could be considered goals for the Department was found in a memorandum on Departmental priorities from the newly appointed Chief Probation Officer in June of this year. It stated:

We will focus on reducing recidivism, empowering and training parents, improving family reunification and permanency planning, improving educational and literacy outcomes, and addressing special needs intervention and skill

building (including health, mental health, gang intervention, gender specific and substance abuse).

These priorities for the Department could fairly easily be converted into clear and consistent statements of goals for the Department.

In our best practices review we found that several probation departments developed a strategic plan that covered a five year period.   These plans identify general trends and issues and establishes the direction and priorities for the Department through clear mission statements and specific strategic goals.

One Department develops an annual "Business Plan" in addition to its strategic plan. This business plan presents current challenges, resources, and strategies for making progress toward strategic goals.

Once such clear goals have been defined the focus should be on identifying specific challenges or obstacles to achieving those specific goals. This practice was identified in our best practice review. Examples of challenges identified include:

- ✓ Meeting the special education needs of juvenile offenders
- ✓ Declining numbers of Deputy Probation Officers due to retirements
- ✓ Increasing numbers of mentally ill offenders
- ✓ Increasing percentages of Proposition 35 offenders who failed to enroll in treatment and failed to report to Probation
- ✓ Aging and deteriorating institutional facilities

Recommendation 1: The Probation Department should develop clear and specific strategic goals.

Finding 3: There is little continuity between the Probation Department's Strategic Plan and Strategic Maps, or from one year's Strategic Map to another.

In reviewing the Probation Department's Strategic Plan and annual Strategic Maps we found there is little or no link between the Strategic Plan and Strategic Maps, or from one year's Strategic Map to the next. It appears that each years Strategic Map was started from a new beginning rather than building from the Strategic Plan and previous years Strategic Maps.

This lack of consistent strategic goals and strategies is reflected in the perspectives of employees.   In our survey of Department employees only 56 percent agreed the Department has a clear and consistent direction.   Additionally, only 72 percent of employees agreed they understood the Department's priorities.   Department management felt similarly, with only 71 percent agreeing that managers share the same vision, and only 72 percent agreeing that decisions are consistent with the Department vision.

Recommendation 2: The Probation Department should maintain consistent goals in its Strategic Plan and Annual Strategic Map unless substantial changes occur in the Department's mission or operations.

Involvement in Strategic Planning

Finding 4: The Probation Department's strategic planning effort does not engage mid-management or Department employees in identifying issues or developing effective strategies

Effective strategic planning must be an inclusive process, involving members of the organization at all levels. This is true because employees at mid and lower levels have a much deeper understanding of the day-to-day ground level activities necessary to deliver effective services. They also tend to have the best understanding of the challenges and obstacles to providing effective service. Given this perspective, mid and lower level employees often provide the best ideas and strategies for improving service.

Effective strategic planning also requires open discussion and debate, allowing and even encouraging disagreement during the process of developing strategies. Although most Department Managers (76 percent) agreed they had participated in the development of the Strategic Plan and Strategic Maps, it was clear that many were not involved in strategic decision-making. In our survey of Department Managers only 55 percent agreed Department Management encourages discussion and debate on key issues and concerns.

In our best practices review we found a Probation Department that developed three Department-wide working groups to address three high level strategic issues. These working groups conducted analysis and developed potential solutions, which were presented to the management team during quarterly half-day management planning retreats.

Another example from our best practices review was the creation of a Labor-Management Committee to engage in a cooperative partnership focused on identifying and resolving labor issues.

Recommendation 3: The Probation Department's strategic planning effort should actively engage Department managers and employees through issue and strategy-focused working groups.

Emphasis on Strategic Analysis

Developing a meaningful strategic plan requires both information collection and analysis and strategic decision-making. As mentioned previously, the Probation Department Strategic Plan and Strategic Maps are basically compilations of projects or tasks to be

completed by the Department. There is no evidence of any substantive collection or analysis of strategic information, development of strategic issues, or evaluation of alternative strategies.

One manager put it succinctly as "We keep doing things backwards," basically saying that the Department too often starts with a directive, does training to implement the directive, and then figures out the directive cannot be implemented, which results in the directive being changed and a need for retraining. "We waste a lot of time and cause a lot of confusion doing business this way." "We need to start thoughtfully thinking through what we want to accomplish - and how - and then issue Directives."

Finding 5: The Probation Department's strategic plan and annual strategic map lack many of the basic elements of comprehensive strategic planning, including:

- ✓ *Consideration of current and anticipated trends expected to affect the Department's operations*
- ✓ *Assessment of external factors that affect the Department's operations*
- ✓ *Assessment of internal resources, capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses*
- ✓ *Identification and assessment of key constituencies / clients*
- ✓ *Review of best practices or industry leaders*
- ✓ *Development and analysis of alternative approaches and strategies*

Trend Analysis – There are numerous demographic, social, economic, and crime trends that substantially impact the work of the Probation Department and its ability to deliver effective services. Understanding these trends and their impact requires analysis. We found no evidence of any such analysis within the Department or as part of the Department's strategic planning efforts.

In out best practices review we found a Probation Department that used a combination of University and in-house expertise to provide an overview of key economic, demographic, social, and crime trends that could potentially impact the Department's operations, workload, and effectiveness. Some of these key trends included:

- ✓ Projected increases in the teen through early adult population impacting juvenile probation and juvenile institutions, as well as young adults in their most crime prone years
- ✓ The proportion of minorities, particularly the Asian and Hispanic communities, is expected to increase substantially
- ✓ Females make up a larger proportion of felony arrests, increasing 32 percent over 10 years

Internal Assessment – The Probation Department has both substantial internal strengths and substantial internal weaknesses. Having a clear understanding of these, and how they impact the Department is fundamental to strategic planning. The Probation Department has conducted a survey of employees, and has conducted employee focus group meetings. However, we could find no linkage between these

efforts and the strategic planning efforts. Additionally, we found no evidence analysis of workload, employee skills and abilities, or organizational strengths and weaknesses.

Key Constituencies / Clients – Identifying key constituents and understanding their priorities and expectations is important to any organizations' success, and a key element of strategic planning. The Probation Department serves a broad range of constituents. The probationers assigned to the Department for detention or supervision are in one sense clients. Other key constituents include the Courts and judges, law enforcement agencies, and the child welfare community. Each of these are impacted by the services provided by the Probation Department, and each can also contribute to or detract from the Department's ability to provide effective services.

The Probation Department has done very little to clearly identify its key constituents or clients, or to determine their priorities and expectations. The Department did conduct a survey of judges. However, there does not appear to be any linkage between the survey results and the Department's strategic planning.

The Department has also participated in multi-department customer service oriented surveys. These surveys, while useful for obtaining information on customer satisfaction with how long it took to provide service or the courtesy with which service was provided, do not provide information on customer needs or priorities needed for effective strategic planning.

The Department also collects grievance forms from its clients. These also provide limited strategic information, and do not appear to be tied to the strategic planning process.

In our best practices review we found a Department that identifies specific clients for each goal in its annual business plan. Clients include Judges and Commissioners of the County Juvenile and Criminal Courts, adult and juvenile probationers, and victims of crime.

Review of Best Practices – Identifying how similar organizations are addressing strategic issues is another key element of strategic planning. The Department has identified and adapted best practices from other organizations. Examples include the development of the Los Angeles Risk and Resiliency Check (LARRC) assessment tool, and the move toward "evidence based practices" (focusing on programs that have a demonstrated impact)– defined by the National Institute for Corrections as a best practice. In addition, most managers (78 percent) agreed the Department supports best practices and state-of-the-art approaches. However, these and similar efforts at implementing best practices are typically program driven, and are not part of a larger strategic planning effort.

Alternative Strategies – There are always multiple approaches or strategies for achieving a goal or specific outcome. Determining which strategy or set of strategies will be most effective requires analysis. The first step in this type of analysis is to clearly

define specific goals, and then to develop and analyze alternative approaches to accomplishing each goal. We found no evidence of the Probation Department doing either as part of its strategic planning process.

Recommendation 4: The Probation Department should consider developing a comprehensive strategic planning approach that includes assessments of key trends; internal resources, capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses; identification and assessment of key constituencies and clients; review of best practices and industry leaders; and development and analysis of alternative approaches and strategies.

Re-Evaluation and Modification of Plans / Integration of Short-Term Directives

Finding 6: Significant strategic policy and organizational changes within the Probation Department occur outside of the strategic planning efforts.

Strategic planning is not meant to limit management's ability to respond to short-term issues and needs. In fact, it is essential that management not be constrained from making short-term adjustments. At the same time, if an organization is to be managed strategically, it is important that changes in strategic direction be accomplished through the strategic planning process. Making strategic changes outside the strategic planning process detracts from the credibility of the strategic planning and management processes, and often results in organizational confusion.

Examples of significant strategic changes that have occurred without any linkage to the Department's strategic planning include:

- ✓ Increasing staff accountability by implementing the Special Investigations Unit, modifying the performance evaluation process, and modifying the injury on duty (4850) protocols
- ✓ Major changes in hiring and promotional practices by moving to open competitive exams for most new and promotional positions
- ✓ Restoring a focus on training by establishing new training academies, requiring staff to be trained and evaluated prior to being placed on assignment, identifying knowledge and skills required for each position
- ✓ Modifying the Camp Program from a 3-month, 6-month, or 9-month program to a program that is determined by the youth's academic achievement, behavioral objectives, life skills, transition plan, and risk to public safety
- ✓ Implementing the Los Angeles Risk and Resiliency Check (LARRC) tool for assessing the needs of juveniles

Each of these initiatives is clearly essential, and implementing them is clearly the right thing to do. These initiatives address fairly long-term issues that could have and should have been addressed through an effective strategic planning process.

The practice of the Probation Department has been to modify the strategic plan retrospectively. In other words, substantial strategic changes are implemented, and then these changes are incorporated into the strategic map – rather than proactively outlining changes in the strategic plan and map and using these tools to direct the Department.

Recommendation 5: The Probation Department should ensure that substantial changes in strategic direction or new strategic initiatives occur and are implemented as part of the Department's strategic planning process.

Strategic Planning Resources and Capabilities

Finding 7: The Probation Department has not provided the resources or developed the capacity to conduct comprehensive strategic planning or to manage strategically.

A key reason for shortcomings in the Probation Department's strategic planning efforts is the lack of staff resources with the skills and experience necessary to develop and implement effective strategic plans. As with any discipline, effective strategic planning requires specific skills and experience.

Developing a strategic plan is meaningless unless those plans are implemented and progress toward goals monitored. This "Strategic Management" function is considered an executive function, and should be part of the Chief Probation Officer's executive operations.

Recommendation 6: The Probation Department should consider establishing a Strategic Management/Quality Assurance function and capability within the Department's Executive Office and provide it with the resources necessary to develop a meaningful strategic plan and develop mechanisms to ensure effective implementation.

Management and Employee Survey Results Related to Strategic Planning

Our approach to evaluating the Probation Department's strategic planning included administering two surveys - one of Department managers and one of all Department employees. The following exhibits display the results of these surveys related to strategic planning and are referred to throughout this section of the report. More detailed results are available in the ***Los Angeles County Probation County Department 2005 Management Survey Report*** and the ***Los Angeles County Probation Department 2005 Employee Survey Report,*** which are available for review from the Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller's Office.
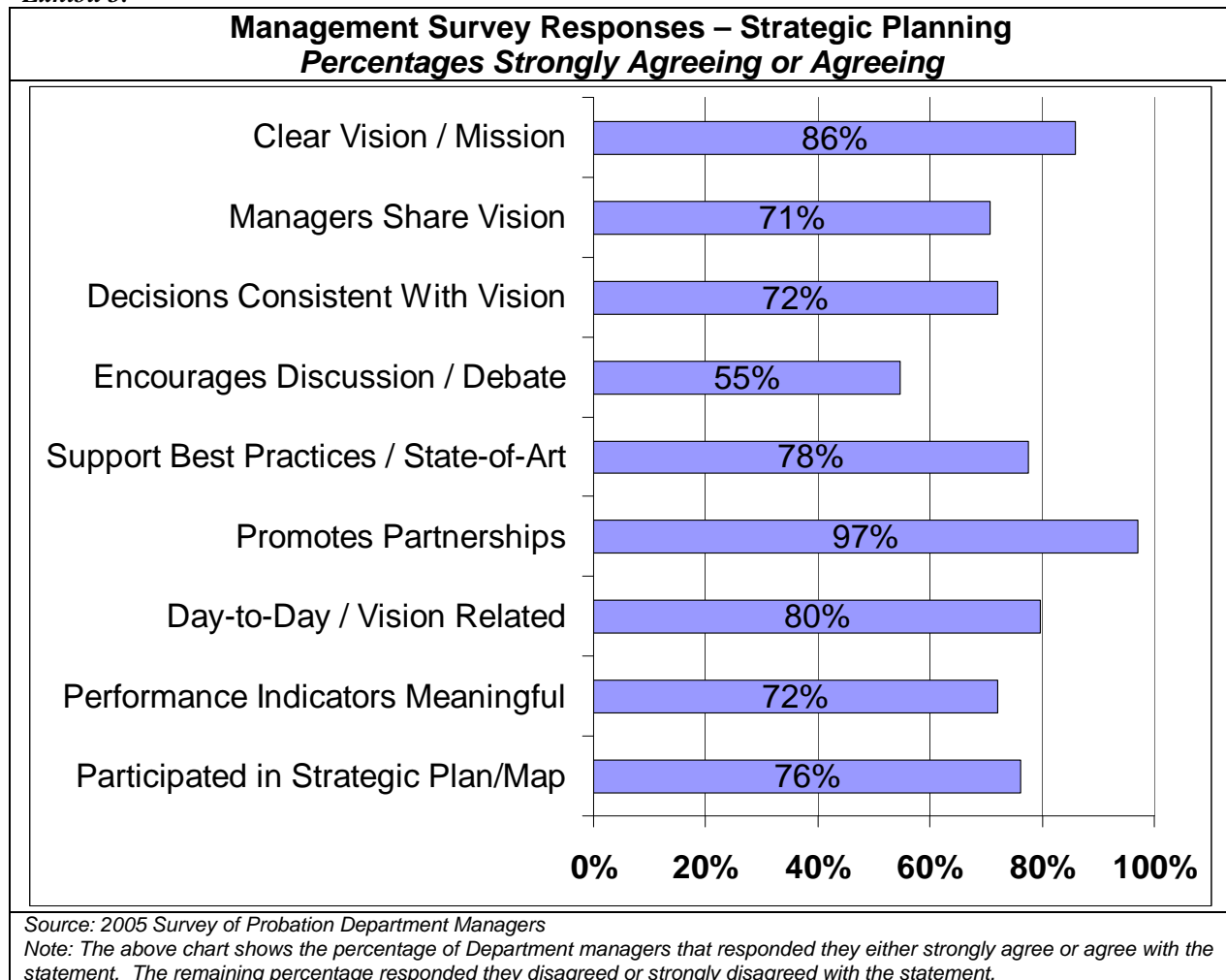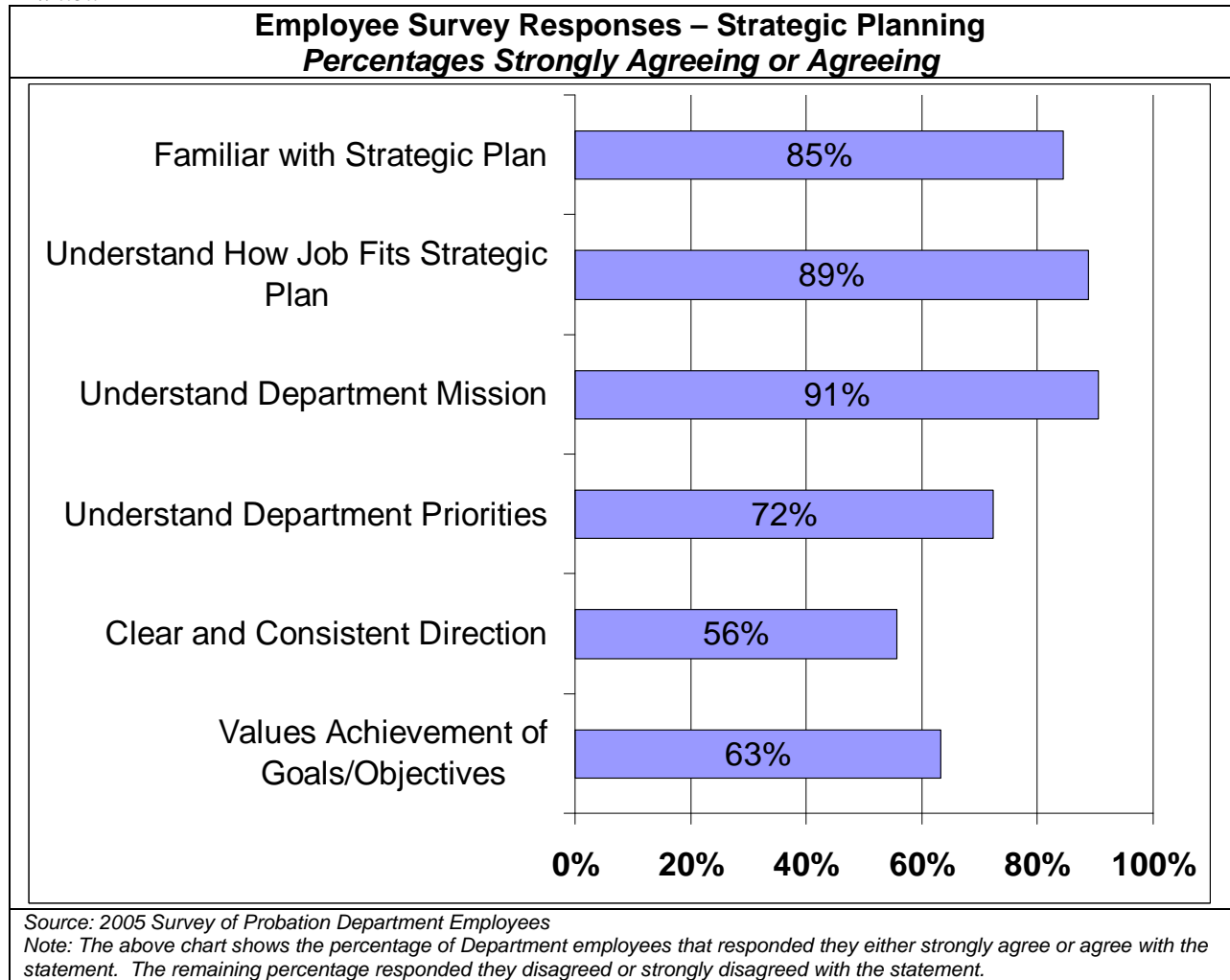
Exhibit 3:

Management Survey Responses – Strategic Planning
Percentages Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing

Category	Percentage
Clear Vision / Mission	86%
Managers Share Vision	71%
Decisions Consistent With Vision	72%
Encourages Discussion / Debate	55%
Support Best Practices / State-of-Art	78%
Promotes Partnerships	97%
Day-to-Day / Vision Related	80%
Performance Indicators Meaningful	72%
Participated in Strategic Plan/Map	76%

Source: 2005 Survey of Probation Department Managers
Note: The above chart shows the percentage of Department managers that responded they either strongly agree or agree with the statement. The remaining percentage responded they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Exhibit 4

Employee Survey Responses – Strategic Planning
Percentages Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing

Category	Percentage
Familiar with Strategic Plan	85%
Understand How Job Fits Strategic Plan	89%
Understand Department Mission	91%
Understand Department Priorities	72%
Clear and Consistent Direction	56%
Values Achievement of Goals/Objectives	63%

Source: 2005 Survey of Probation Department Employees
Note: The above chart shows the percentage of Department employees that responded they either strongly agree or agree with the statement. The remaining percentage responded they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

2. LINKING STRATEGY TO OPERATIONS

Linking strategic decisions or goals and specific strategies to the operations of an organization is the most difficult step and the place most strategic planning or strategic management efforts fail. To ensure successful implementation, strategies must be specifically assigned, with implementation timeframes clearly defined. Oversight to ensure accountability is also important. In addition, there are several keys to successful implementation. These include:

✓ **Communication of Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives -** including efforts to clearly communicate the elements of the strategic plan with staff at all levels of the organization, key constituency and client groups, potential strategic partners, and funding organizations. It is essential that each of these have a good understanding of the focus and direction of the Probation Department, their role in achieving goals and objectives, and how their contributions will be measured and valued.

✓ **Clarity Of Strategies To Achieve Goals And Objectives -** strategies must be specific and understandable or there is little likelihood they can be implemented.

✓ **Tools Supporting Implementation** - including administrative mechanisms and systems for tracking and managing projects, activities, processes, and programs to ensure consistency in operations with the Probation Department.

✓ **Accountability For Achieving Results** - including assignment and tracking of responsibility for specific strategies and projects that ensures ownership for results, provides feedback on progress, and measures individual and group performance within the Probation Department.

✓ **Measurement Of Progress -** including the degree to which a meaningful performance measurement framework has been established that includes a balanced set of indicators, ensures the collection of sound and reliable indicator data, provides for the analysis and reporting of indicator information, and drives service improvement efforts and the testing of new initiatives.

✓ **Feedback from Constituents / Clients -** including the impact of strategies implemented on the satisfaction of the Department's customers or on their concerns and issues.

✓ **Development Of Staff Capabilities -** including efforts to address employee issues and concerns, to develop staff's understanding of the strategic direction of the Probation Department and performance measurement efforts, as well as to address organizational resource, and capabilities identified in the strategic planning process.

✓ **Sharing and Celebration Of Progress -** including how progress made toward achieving the Probation Department's goals are shared with staff at all levels of the organization, key constituency and client groups, potential strategic partners, and funding organizations. Progress should be celebrated to enhance commitment to the organization and its strategic direction.

In this section of the management audit we evaluated the Los Angeles County Probation Department's approach and efforts to link the Department's strategic planning efforts to operations. Consistent with the Scope of Work defined by the Request for Proposals we focused on the following areas:

✓ Linkages Between Strategic Initiatives and Operations
✓ Mechanisms to Verify Implementation of Management Directives
✓ Coordination of Activities, Processes, and Programs
✓ Staff Development and Training In Administrative Processes
✓ Relevance, Alignment, and Use of Performance Indicators
✓ Reliability of Performance Reporting
✓ Customer / Constituent Satisfaction and Performance Reporting

Probation Department's Approach to Linking Strategy to Operations

The Probation Department has implemented several tools to attempt to link its strategic planning efforts to the operations of the Department. These include:

Annual Strategic Map - The Strategic Map is organized around the County's organizational goals, and additional programmatic goals – Children and Families' Well-Being, Community Services, Health and Mental Health, and Public Safety. Under each of the above organizational goals the current Strategic Map are a series of "strategies." For each of these strategies there are a series of "objectives" that are essentially actions to be taken to implement each strategy. Most of the objectives have dates for their completion. However, it is not clear what part of the organization is responsible for implementation.

Performance Reporting in the Annual Budget – The Probation Department Proposed Budget includes a section on Departmental Performance Measures for each of the Department's major programs. Indicators provide information on the effectiveness of the program. For example, "the percentage of eligible youth who receive a mental health screening within 72 hours of admission." Operational measures provide a sense of the level of activity or workload or other operational information. For example, "total new admissions per year."

Annual Performance Counts Reports – The Performance Counts reports are compilations of program indicators and operational measures for each of the Department's programs. The indicators are presented with targets and actual numbers

for three fiscal years. Most of the indicators and measures are process oriented, and much of the information is marked as not available.

Management Performance Scorecards – These scorecards are intended to provide an objective basis for rating and ranking the performance of individual managers within each Bureau. Specific criteria have been developed for each of the Bureau's management, and each manager is rated each month based on that criteria.

Bureau Level Monitoring of Activity and Performance – Each of the Department's Bureaus maintains and uses reports on the level of activity and some performance indicators to manage their day-to-day operations.

Most managers of the Probation Department feel there is consistency between the overall vision of the Department and performance expectations and management directives. In our survey of Probation Department Managers 92 percent agreed that performance expectations are consistent with the Department vision, and 88 percent agreed that management directives are consistent with the vision. Department employees see less of a connection between performance standards and Department goals and objectives, with only 57 percent agreeing they are consistent.

Linkages Between Strategic Initiatives and Operations

For a strategic plan or strategic initiatives to be effectively implemented there must be clear linkages between those initiatives and the Department's operations and activities. There must also be effective mechanisms for ensuring the strategic initiatives and related directives from management are being followed. Many strategic initiatives required coordination of activities, processes and programs across Department organizational lines. There must be effective mechanisms to encourage and facilitate such coordination. Finally, effective implementation requires that Department management and staff have the necessary skills and training.

Finding 8: Linkages between Probation Department strategic initiatives and operations and activities of the Department are limited.

While the Probation Department has developed its annual Strategic Map, it appears to have little relevance or impact on day-to-day operations. The first step in ensuring a linkage between strategic decisions and operations is having a clear mission and clear goals and strategies. As discussed in the Strategic Planning section of this report the Probation Department has not developed clear and consistent goals. Our recommendation is that the Department develop such clear and consistent goals.

While many of the strategies contained in the Strategic Map are clear, it is difficult for Probation Department management or staff to determine which strategies are intended to be implemented by their part of the organization, or for which they are responsible. The strategies are organized into the County-wide goals. While it is important that the

Probation Department be consistent with these goals, they are too high level to be meaningful or useful in the day-to-day operations of the Department. Strategies should also be specifically assigned to either organizational units or specific managers.

To be fully implemented, strategies must be translated into actions. This is most effectively accomplished through development of an implementation action plan. The Department is currently creating these action plans for the implementation of changes in the Detention Services Bureau required under the Department of Justice Settlement Agreement. A similar approach should be used for Department-wide strategic initiatives.

Many strategic initiatives will require substantial resources to effectively implement. This requires a direct linkage between the strategic initiatives and the Department's budget and resource planning.

Other issues related to implementing strategic decisions were identified from our review and comments made by managers of the Probation Department including:

✓ **Involvement in Strategy Development** – As discussed in the Strategic Planning Section of this report there is little involvement of middle management and staff in the development of strategic initiatives. Such involvement can help create an investment in the success of initiatives, as well as a deeper understanding of the purpose and approach of the initiative.

✓ **Tying Strategic Initiatives to Goals or Outcomes** – For strategic initiatives to be implemented, those implementing them must see their value. This requires they be clearly tied to a well accepted and valued goal or outcome. Most of the Probation Department's strategic initiatives are presented simply as directives from management, with little or no effort to identify the purpose. As one manager put it in response to the Probation Department Management Survey: "There is a disconnect in the implementation of many programs because the staff are not understanding the purpose and process of the project or program. The "just do it" attitude of many administrators hinders full implementation of many projects."

✓ **Communication** - A key to ensuring strategic initiatives are implemented is communication. There is no plan to communicate the strategic plan or its initiatives to the Department, and we found no examples of efforts to communicate the strategic initiatives to the members of the Department. There are currently no department publications other than those that tell staff of operational changes. Many organizations provide a summary of the organizations strategic plan in easy to read and understandable format. Others have the leaders of the organization provide video taped messages to Department employees explaining strategic goals and initiatives. A suggestion made by numerous Probation Department managers was to hold meetings with management and staff to present and discuss strategic initiatives.

✓ **Execution** - Some managers attribute the poor linkage between strategic initiatives and operations to poor execution. A comment made as part of the survey of Department managers is: "Specific operational requirements that surface during implementation are not addressed, implementation across work locations is not coordinated, emergent problems are not resolved, and misunderstandings and partial interpretations of goals, directives, and tasks are neither recognized nor addressed."

✓ **Disconnect between Headquarters and the Field** – A prevalent view is that strategic initiatives are most often developed by managers and staff assistants at Headquarters, with limited practical knowledge of how things operate in the field. A team approach, merging strategy development with real-world practical knowledge, would be preferable.

Recommendation 7: The Probation Department should consider strengthening linkages between its strategic initiatives and the operations of the Department by:

✓ *Developing an implementation action plan for each key strategic initiative that clearly defines specific implementation steps, clearly assigns responsibility for implementation, identifies resources required for implementation, and establishes the implementation timeline*
✓ *Linking strategic initiatives directly to the Department's budget and resource planning*
✓ *Developing a Strategic Plan communications element to identify specific actions to be taken to clearly communicate the Department's goals/priorities to the entire management team and staff. The element should focus on identifying and communicating specific roles of staff in implementing the strategic initiatives*
✓ *Increasing involvement in strategy development and action planning by middle management and staff*

Mechanisms to Verify Implementation of Management Directives

Finding 9: The Probation Department has limited capability and mechanisms to ensure management directives are implemented.

It is not enough for management to communicate strategic initiatives or issue directives, there must be mechanisms in place to ensure and verify that those directives are being implemented or followed. In our survey of Probation Department managers only 44 percent of Department managers agreed that the Department had adequate mechanisms to ensure management directives are being followed.

The first step in ensuring management directives are followed is to clearly assign responsibility for implementation. As stated previously, the strategic initiatives defined in the Department's Strategic Map have not been clearly assigned. Once assigned, a

project tracking system would be useful in determining progress made and in implementing strategic initiatives.

While most Department employees (94 percent) agreed they understand the expectations for their job in our survey of Probation Department employees, they felt less positive about other aspects. Only 40 percent felt that Department employees were held accountable for poor performance. Even fewer, 34 percent, agreed that good work was properly recognized.

While the Department has implemented some oversight mechanisms, Department management and staff believe many of the oversight mechanisms are of poor quality and unreliable. Some managers referred to oversight mechanisms that were implemented as poor quality and inaccurate. One example, the late and missing court report program, was seen as counterproductive and caused some resentment among managers and staff.

Recommendation 8: The Probation Department should consider developing mechanisms for clearly assigning and tracking strategies and ensuring that management directives are implemented including a strategic initiative project tracking system.

Coordination of Activities, Processes, and Programs

Finding 10: The Probation Department has limited mechanisms for planning and coordinating issues and activities that cross Bureau lines.

Like most organizations, the activities and operations of each of the Probation Department's Bureaus can and do substantially impact the other Bureaus. However, there are few mechanisms for planning or coordinating issues and activities that cross Bureau lines.

The most common approach to cross-Bureau issues is to pass the issue up the chain of command to the Bureau Chief level. At that level it is less likely that issues will be effectively addressed. This is largely due to the scope of responsibility of each of the Bureau Managers, and the large number of issues and initiatives each is trying to manage. The details of the issues are also lost at that level, and if a solution is developed it is not likely to be effective.

One of the few examples of cross-Bureau coordination are the periodic meetings between the Detention Services Bureau and the Residential Treatment Service Bureau to discuss issues related to moving juveniles among the Halls and the Camps. These meetings are relatively new, and followed many years of poor coordination, conflict, and substantial issues between the two Bureaus.

Many of the Probation Department managers we interviewed expressed frustration with the lack of a forum to identify, discuss, and resolve significant issues within their own Bureaus. Most felt it would be nearly impossible to effectively address substantive issues that cross Bureau lines.

Recommendation 9: The Probation Department should consider establishing mechanisms that facilitate planning and coordinating issues and activities that cross Bureau lines, including cross-Bureau issue oriented working groups.

Staff Development and Training in Administrative Processes

Finding 11: The Probation Department has given little attention to staff development and training related to administrative processes such as collection and analysis of strategic information, strategic planning and management, and performance measurement.

The Probation Department needs managers with a strong background in administrative processes, organizational management, and critical thinking and analysis. The predominant, if not exclusive, focus of Probation Department training has been on meeting the requirements of the Standards for Training in Corrections (STC) Program. There has been little or no training or focus on how to effectively plan or manage strategically, or how to develop, use, and report meaningful performance indicators.

Recommendation 10: The Probation Department should consider developing staff training in administrative processes such as collection and analysis of strategic information, strategic planning and management, and performance measurement.

Relevance and Alignment of Performance Measurement

Performance indicators are intended to demonstrate the success or effectiveness of organizational or program activities in addressing a specific need or attaining a specific goal. They serve much the same purpose that keeping score in a competitive sport serves – demonstrating what is and what is not working – and which team's approach is working best.

For a performance measurement system to be meaningful it must be relevant to the organization or program – focused on the real outcomes that are to be achieved or the benefits the organization or program was created to provide. The performance measurement system must also be aligned with the organizations mission, goals and objectives. The system should be measuring things that are directly related to the organizations or program's goals. Lastly, a performance measurement system must be used to "inform decisions" and to modify approaches and activities. Not using the information would be similar to a coach not using game scores to target and improve the team's performance.

Finding 12: Many of the performance indicators used by the Probation Department are process oriented and do not adequately reflect the outcomes or what is achieved by Probation Department programs and activities.

Performance indicators should be tied specifically to Department and program goals. As has been discussed previously, the Probation Department has not developed clear and consistent goals. We found that the clearest statement of what could be considered goals for the Department was in a memorandum on Departmental priorities from the newly appointed Chief Probation Officer in June of this year. It stated:

We will focus on reducing recidivism, empowering and training parents, improving family reunification and permanency planning, improving educational and literacy outcomes, and addressing special needs intervention and skill building (including health, mental health, gang intervention, gender specific and substance abuse).

Advantages of a
Performance Measurement System

✓ Identify poorly performing programs, thereby signaling the need to make changes

✓ Identify programs that are performing well and presumably should be expanded

✓ Examine the value of existing programs on the basis of their outcomes rather than solely on their costs, outputs, and general statements as to their value

✓ Assess new programs for what they are specifically expected to accomplish, not just their costs or general statements of their expected value

✓ Compare different proposed options on their expected outcomes and costs

✓ Help identify agency activities that have similar outcome indicators and are thus candidates for coordination and perhaps revision, reduction, or deletion

✓ Justify the budget choices more effectively to agency and elected officials – and the public

✓ Link, even if only roughly, the proposed budget size to the amount of outcome expected

✓ Provide the basis for greater agency accountability, to the extent that reasonable performance targets are set for the budget year and achieved values are subsequently compared to targets

From: Performance Measurement – Getting Results, Harry Hatry, The Urban Institute Press, Washington, DC, 1999.

If these are indeed the goals of the Probation Department, outcome indicators should reflect these goals. Outcome indicators related to these goals might include:

✓ Percentage of Probationers who are not arrested for a crime (recidivate) during the five years following completion of probation
✓ Percentage of families successfully reunified and remaining unified for a period of five years
✓ Percentage of probation youth scoring satisfactorily on scholastic aptitude and literacy tests
✓ Percentage of probationers "making progress" in addressing special needs (health, mental health, gang intervention, and substance abuse) and building skills

While some of the Probation Department's outcome indicators are focused on true outcomes, many are process indicators. These process indicators are essential for managing the operation, but should be clearly outlined in a hierarchy of performance indicators as contributing to a final outcome.

Recommendation 11: The Probation Department should consider reviewing its performance measurement system and developing a hierarchy of performance indicators based on clear and consistent Department goals.

Communication and Use of Performance Measurement

Finding 13: The Probation Department's performance measurement system is not effective at communicating to constituents and clients or employees what the Department is providing or accomplishing, or in identifying areas in need of management attention and change.

A key purpose of performance measurement is to communicate to key stakeholders, including constituents, clients, and employees, what an organization is contributing and accomplishing, as well as the benefit provided by that organization. Performance measurement can be used as the basis to share and celebrate the success of an organization, as well as to identify and clearly communicate areas that need further improvement and change. As one Probation Department manager stated: "An information campaign would be helpful articulating the direction the Department is going in. This needs to be reinforced repeatedly until it becomes part of the culture of the department."

Recommendation 12: The Probation Department should consider developing clear and concise performance reports, with easy to read and understood graphics and charts, demonstrating the impact of Probation Department programs and activities. These reports should be provided to Department constituent groups and employees, and should be used to share and celebrate Department successes, and to identify and communicate areas where additional focus and change is required.

Reliability of Performance Reporting

Finding 14: The Probation Department does not have adequate capabilities or mechanisms to accurately track and report on its performance measures.

It is important that performance information reported be based on sound data and that the information be complete, accurate, and consistent. The intent of providing performance information is to provide a basis for evaluating the organization, and to support decision making at various levels.

As part of this management audit we selected eight specific performance indicators for review to ascertain if the numbers used are credible, verifiable and accurate. The eight selected were reported in the Probation Department's budget and are:

1. Percentage of eligible youth who receive 300 minutes of education per day
2. Percentage of youth who receive mental health screening within 72 hours of admission
3. Percentage & number of eligible Probation youth who graduate
4. Percentage & number of eligible youth who obtain their GED
5. Percentage of Probation youth who complete probation with no subsequent sustained petition
6. Percentage of investigation reports available to court at the time of hearing
7. Percentage of risk assessments completed
8. Percentage of adult investigation reports meeting quality standards

Our conclusions from the detailed review of these performance indicators are:
- ✓ Procedures for developing estimates are not consistent among the different Bureaus of the Department.
- ✓ Procedures for developing performance indicator percentages are not properly documented.
- ✓ The actual numbers upon which the performance indicator percentages are based are not required to be submitted and therefore not subject to any independent review or verification by the Budget Section or other independent third party.

Recommendation 13: The Probation Department should consider
- ✓ *Developing and implementing procedures for the proper calculation and development of all performance indicators including formal documentation,*
- ✓ *Communicating these procedures to all individuals responsible for preparing performance indicators,*
- ✓ *Consistently applying these procedures throughout all Bureaus of the Department,*

✓ *Requiring the Budget section and/or other independent third party to review on a regular basis actual numbers upon which performance indicator percentages should be based.*

Customer/Constituent Satisfaction and Performance Reporting

A key outcome indicator can be the satisfaction of customers or constituents – with the intent of improving that level of satisfaction.

Finding 15: The Probation Department has not clearly defined its customers and has no ongoing mechanisms in place to evaluate customer satisfaction or to develop and implement strategies to improve customer satisfaction.

Many comments were made by Probation Department managers about the lack of clarity of who the customer is. Some thought it might be probationers, or the courts, or perhaps crime victims. Customers or constituents of an organization or program should typically be defined as those who benefit from the Program, or are direct recipients of service. In the case of the Probation Department each of the above groups are customers or constituents. The general public, as well as law enforcement agencies, hopefully benefit through reduced crime and could be considered customers or constituents of the Probation Department.

The Probation Department has done very little to clearly identify its key constituents or clients, or to determine their priorities and expectations, or the impact of the Department's programs on them. The Department did conduct a survey of judges. However, this appears to have been a one-time survey, and there does not appear to have been any strategies developed to attempt to improve the future survey results. The Department has also participated in multi-department customer service oriented surveys. These surveys, were also one time surveys, and do not provide any useful ongoing performance information.

Recommendation 14: The Probation Department should consider clearly defining its customers and developing ongoing mechanisms to evaluate customer satisfaction and should develop and implement strategies to improve customer satisfaction.

Management and Employee Survey Results Related to Linking Strategy to Operations

Our approach to evaluating the Probation Department's linking of strategy to operations included administering two surveys - one of Department managers and one of all Department employees. The following exhibits display the results of these surveys related to linking strategy to operations, which are referred to throughout this section of the report. More detailed results are available in the *Los Angeles County Probation Department 2005 Management Survey Report* and the *Los Angeles County Probation Department 2005 Employee Survey Report,* which is available for review from the Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller's Office.
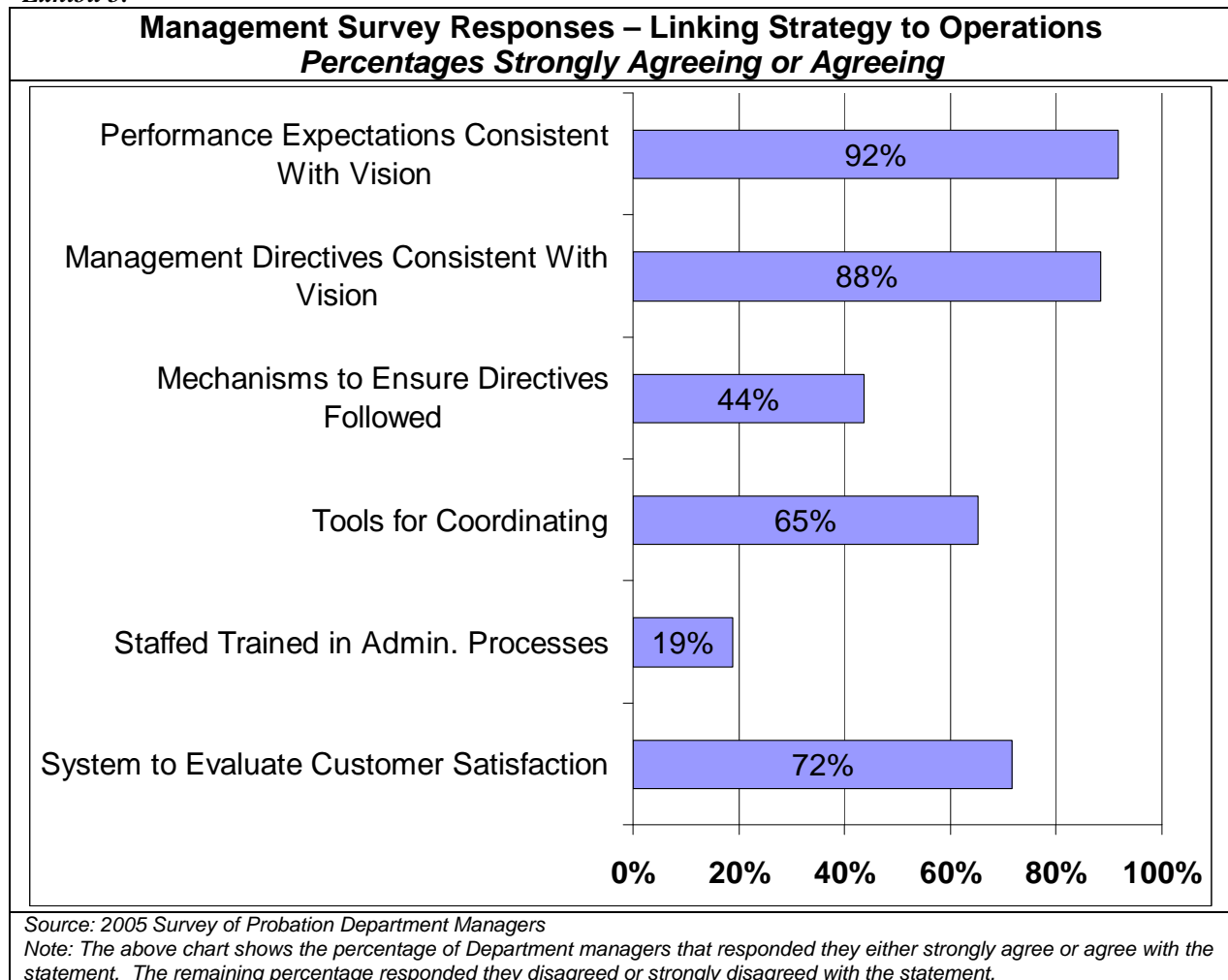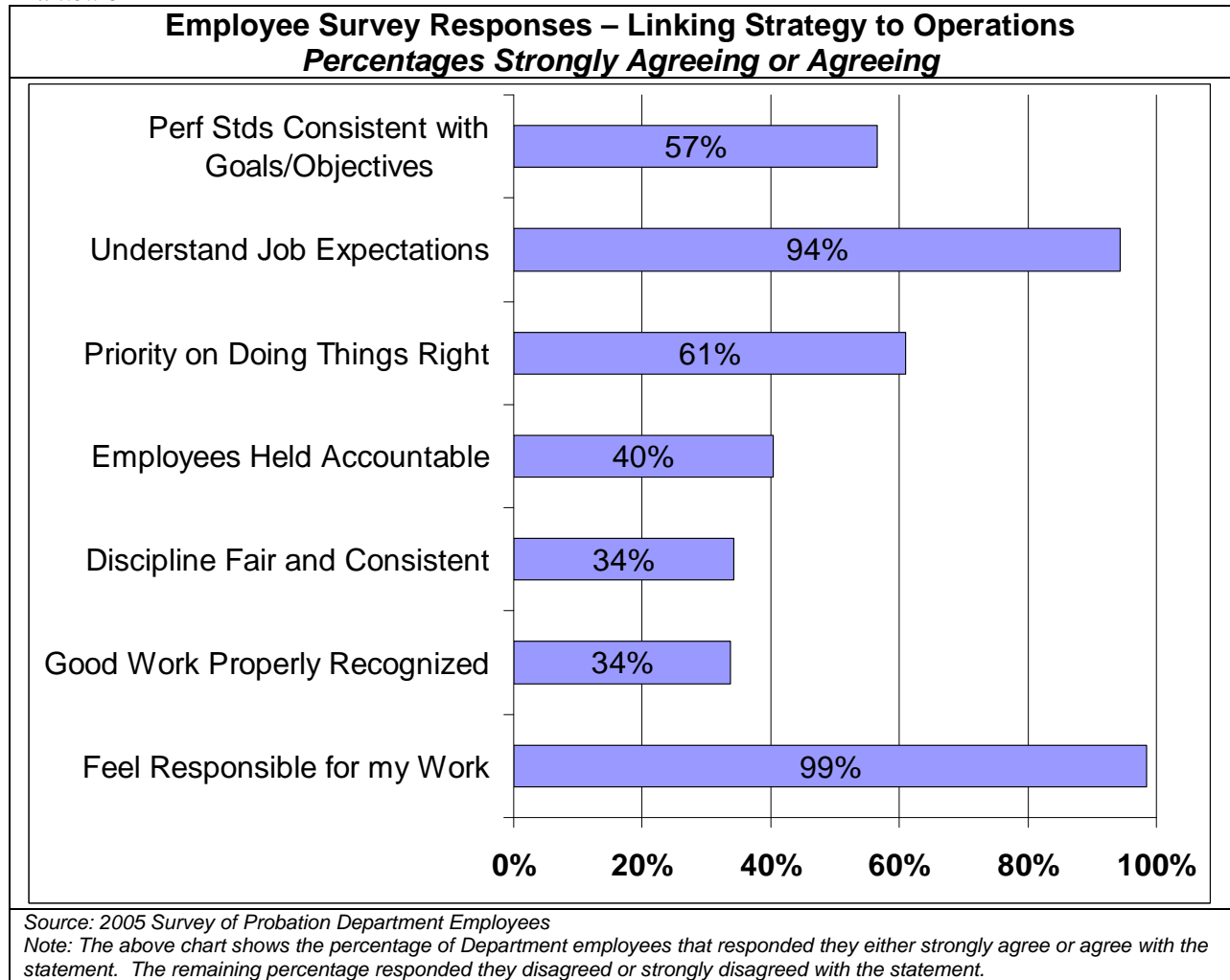
Exhibit 5:

Management Survey Responses – Linking Strategy to Operations
Percentages Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing

Statement	Percentage
Performance Expectations Consistent With Vision	92%
Management Directives Consistent With Vision	88%
Mechanisms to Ensure Directives Followed	44%
Tools for Coordinating	65%
Staffed Trained in Admin. Processes	19%
System to Evaluate Customer Satisfaction	72%

Source: 2005 Survey of Probation Department Managers
Note: The above chart shows the percentage of Department managers that responded they either strongly agree or agree with the statement. The remaining percentage responded they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Exhibit 6

Employee Survey Responses – Linking Strategy to Operations
Percentages Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing

Statement	Percentage
Perf Stds Consistent with Goals/Objectives	57%
Understand Job Expectations	94%
Priority on Doing Things Right	61%
Employees Held Accountable	40%
Discipline Fair and Consistent	34%
Good Work Properly Recognized	34%
Feel Responsible for my Work	99%

Source: 2005 Survey of Probation Department Employees
Note: The above chart shows the percentage of Department employees that responded they either strongly agree or agree with the statement. The remaining percentage responded they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

3. ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP

An organization's structure should provide a framework of functional areas within which individuals can achieve the organization's goals. An effective organization structure clearly reflects the priorities of the organization, facilitates effective service delivery and problem solving, ensures consistency of direction and management control, minimizes obstacles and barriers to performance, and stimulates a culture of shared accomplishment and teamwork. In addition, the following are key elements of effective organizations:

✓ **Consistency of Organizational Structure With Strategic Priorities -** including the extent to which the current organization structure reflects the relative importance of goals, objectives, and strategies as reflected in the Probation Department's strategic plan, as well as the relative importance of Department activities to key constituencies and clients.

✓ **Linkages Between Units With Related or Dependant Functions -** Determine if functions that rely on or are dependant on other units of the Probation Department have adequate links established with those units to ensure efficient and effective operations. Determine where linkages need to be developed or strengthened.

✓ **Overlaps and Duplications of Functions and Responsibilities -** including the extent to which the same or similar functions or activities are being performed by multiple units of the Probation Department. Alternative approaches will be developed and analyzed.

✓ **Levels of Responsibility and Decision-Making Authority -** including the degree to which those responsible for achieving results within the Probation Department have the authority necessary to achieve those results. This will include an evaluation of the number of steps and levels required for basic decision-making within the Department.

✓ **Lines of Communication and Management Control -** including the number and type of management layers, spans of control for managers, and accountability systems and the extent to which each contributes or detracts from communication and management control within the Probation Department.

✓ **Centralization Versus Decentralization of Functions -** including the degree to which functions and decision making are appropriately centralized or decentralized to facilitate effective delivery of service by the Probation Department.

✓ **Management Capacity -** including the level of management training, experience, and capability, to effectively manage their operations and the Probation Department. Management styles, and the degree to which they support the organization, will be evaluated. Deficiencies will be identified, with potential solutions developed.

✓ **Organization Culture and Teamwork -** including the level of commitment to the organization and its mission among the management and staff. This will include the extent to which staff limit themselves or are stuck in roles, and the degree to which members of the Probation Department are willing and able to work effectively as a team to solve problems and accomplish the Department's mission. Management's efforts to develop a positive, team oriented, organizational culture will be evaluated.

In this section of the management audit we evaluated the Los Angeles County Probation Department's organization structure and leadership. Consistent with the Scope of Work defined by the Request for Proposals we focused on the following areas:

✓ Management Capabilities
✓ Spans of Control and Management Layers
✓ Placement of Organizational Units
✓ Management Styles, Teamwork, and Organizational Culture
✓ Linkages with External Organizations
✓ Role and Use of Advisory Committees

Management Capabilities

Effectively managing a large and complex organization such as the Probation Department requires substantial and diverse management capabilities. In addition to having a strong understanding of the specific functions of probation, the management team must include capabilities in all of the elements of effective management.

Finding 16: The Probation Department's management team lacks capabilities in key management areas including strategic planning, performance measurement, and organizational management.

As discussed in the Strategic Planning section of this report, one of the key reasons for the identified shortcomings in the Probation Department's strategic planning and performance measurement efforts is the lack of management capability in these areas. Additionally, the responsibility for these key management functions often falls on managers that are already overburdened managing the Department's day-to-day operations.

The following are some comments from Probation Department managers regarding management capabilities:

Department managers are very good and successful in accomplishing task-oriented projects, however many managers do not see the "big picture" and understand their leadership role and connection to the strategic plan. I believe many of the managers lack the core leadership qualities necessary to effectively communicate and motivate staff to feel a part of the "big picture". Efforts to improve and evaluate the core leadership abilities of our management team would enhance our "management culture" and provide significant improvement in assuring Department staff clearly understand their functions and connection to the mission and goals of the Department.

The department is faced with the need for specialists in specific areas of service delivery such as   education, work development, child threat, etc. The department needs to have director level staff assigned to become very well trained in such areas in order to help in long range planning and program development.

Recommendation 15: The Probation Department should consider providing training in strategic planning, performance measurement, and organizational management to its management team as well as acquiring management personnel from outside the Department with those skills.

Finding 17: The Probation Department's management, until recently, had little to no diversity in professional background and experience.

The tradition within the Probation Department was start at the bottom of the organization and work your way up. As a result, all but one of the Probation Department's top managers have spent essentially their entire career within the Probation Department. The need for increased diversity of management experience has recently been recognized.

The new Chief Probation Officer has opened up recruitments for management positions to those outside of the Department, and has filled several positions with "outsiders." This change has received substantial criticism from within the Department as it goes against the strong organizational culture that everyone should work their way up from the bottom. However, we believe this is a positive move for the Department and will serve to strengthen the Department's management team.

Recommendation 16: The Probation Department should continue its efforts to strengthen its management team by adding managers with diverse professional backgrounds and experience.

Spans of Control and Management Layers

It is important that an organization's structure provide a balance between having a reasonable span of control or number of employees reporting to individual managers and having as few management layers as possible to facilitate effective communication.

Finding 18: Many Probation Department Bureau Managers have too many employees reporting directly to them to provide an effective span of control; and too many operational responsibilities to effectively plan, address long-term issues, and provide the leadership needed to prepare the Department for the future.

In order to provide appropriate direction and oversight managers should typically have somewhere between 8 and 10 functions or persons reporting directly to them. This number should increase or decrease depending on the complexity and diversity of the functions being managed. For example, if all the functions being managed are the same, and are not complex, a manager may be able to be effective with 12 to 14 direct reports. If the functions are all different, and are very complex, a manager may only be able to be effective with 4 to 6 direct reports.

In our review of the Probation Department's management structure we found some Bureau Managers are responsible for too many direct report managers, with as many as 20. In addition 23 percent of the Department managers did not agree that the number of staff reporting to them was appropriate. The following are some of the comments made by Department managers regarding the span of control of some Department managers:

> *Bureau Chiefs have too large a span of supervision. This creates a situation where their time is spent more on day-to-day operational issues rather than policy formulation and implementation and long and short term strategic planning. A layer of management between the Bureau Chiefs and line operation directors is warranted.*

> *Our organization is too flat and the span of supervision is too large. We do not have enough managers to accomplish all tasks.*

> *The Department is overly flat. While there are distinct advantages to not having a multi-layered bureaucracy, unless we expect executives to be routinely involved in the daily details of project management, we need to establish a management level that connects planning to operations and ensures that initiatives are implemented as planned.*

Finding 19: The individual Bureaus of the Probation Department operate very independently from each other, resulting in a very fragmented management approach with little focus on Department-wide issues, and creating difficulty in addressing issues that cross Bureau lines.

Effective organizations must also be structured to facilitate communication and management. The structure of the Probation Department does not seem to facilitate either. In our survey of Probation Department Managers, only 60 percent agreed that the current management layers facilitate management, and only 52 percent agreed that it facilitates communication. Additionally, only 55 percent of Department managers agreed the organizational structure minimized fragmented decision-making. Perhaps more importantly, only 36 percent agreed that there is little or no duplication of effort within the Department. The following are some comments by Department managers regarding the Department's bureaus:

> *Often, each Bureau appears to be its own entity and not part of the Department as a whole.*

> *The department needs to promote teamwork. Each unit views itself as a stand alone unit. We are one department and should operate accordingly.*

> *I believe we need to cross bureaus in order to be more effective. We are entrenched in our own bureau in order to accomplish its goals. However, I believe we can improve the Department's leadership and culture if from time to time we cross bureaus - example in various quarterly meetings to update on what each bureau is doing and have representatives from each bureau work on issues such as services for Juveniles (Juvenile Hall to camp to the field office).*

Finding 20: The functions of the Probation Department field offices are split between three of the Department's Bureaus, with the Director of each field office functionally reporting to three Bureau Chiefs.

Each of the Probation Department's field offices is supervised by one Director. However, most field offices provide supervision of adult probationers, supervision of juvenile probationers, as well as many special services. This means most of the field offices have employees working in them from the Adult Field Services Bureau, the Juvenile Field Services Bureau, and the Juvenile Special Services Bureau. All of these employees are under one Director of the Field Office. While each Field Office Director is assigned to one of the Bureaus, functionally these Directors are working for three different Bureau Chiefs. This split supervision of field offices, and lack of unity of command, often results in conflicting direction and priorities for the field offices, and confusion among the staff.

The following are some comments by Department managers regarding this confusion:

> *An example I can point to are the Juvenile Bureaus. There are competing priorities and decisions are not made uniformly or consistently close enough so that staff are not going crazy trying to meet different requirements for the same process. It is the "I want it done my way" where we have duplication of effort.*

> *There appears to be too many at the top - it's confusing and too many voices to make too many different decisions on the same subject.*

In our best practices review we found that most other Probation Departments are organized around three key functions – Field Supervision, Detention Services, and Treatment Services. Additionally, most have some combination of support or administrative services.

The Probation Department is difficult to organize effectively due to both its diverse functional responsibilities and its large service area. Substantial effort and analysis will be required to develop and implement a more effective organization structure for the Department.

Recommendation 17: The Probation Department should consider re-organizing to provide a more appropriate and consistent span of control, improve communication and coordination, and provide for unity of command to the extent possible. A new organization structure should:
- ✓ ***Focus on the Department's four primary functions – Field Services, Detention Services, Treatment Services, and Support Services***
- ✓ ***Provide a regional or geographic element within the organizational structure***
- ✓ ***Include mechanisms for coordination and communication across functional lines as an element of the organizational structure***

Placement of Organizational Units

It is important that units of an organization be placed at a level and within a functional area consistent with the importance or priority of that area, as well as consistent with other similar functions. In this section we discuss units that should be placed in other areas of the organization.

Finding 21: Organizational responsibility for conducting internal investigations is placed at a level too low to receive the focus and authority needed for them to be effective.

As discussed in the Personnel Management Section of this report, Internal investigations are split between the Internal Affairs Unit in the Administration Bureau, the Special Investigations Unit, internal investigations conducted by each individual bureau, and the Office of Affirmative Action Compliance. There is little coordination among these investigative functions, and no central tracking of all complaints or allegations made.

Recommendation 18: The Probation Department should consider combining the Department's internal investigative functions within the Office of the Chief Probation Officer.

Finding 22: Managers given the responsibility for effectively operating Probation Department detention facilities (Halls) and treatment facilities (Camps) do not have authority over key functions necessary for effective operations, including facility maintenance, key control, clerical functions, and related areas.

A key principle of organization structure is to provide managers with the authority and responsibility for as many of the key functions necessary to effectively operate their part of the organization. Superintendents at the Probation Department's three juvenile halls and Directors at the Department's 16 camps are responsible for the effective day-to-day operations of these facilities. However, they do not have the authority over key facility functions including basic maintenance, laundry, food services, clerical functions, and perhaps most importantly – key control. The Department managers are held accountable for delivering service and ensuring security, but do not have direct authority over key functions necessary to accomplish this. These facility support functions are currently under the Management Service Bureau.

While it is important to maintain some Department-wide consistency in how these facility support functions are performed, the direct report for these functions should be at the facility. Facility Superintendents and Directors see the day-to-day operation of these functions, and are in the best position to evaluate the performance of staff performing these functions.

Recommendation 19: The Probation Department should consider placing Service Managers and subsidiary functions at each of the Department's detention and treatment facilities under the authority of the Facility Managers while maintaining a central coordination function.

Management Styles, Teamwork, and Organizational Culture

For any organization to be effective it must have constructive and relatively consistent management styles, must value and promote working as a team, and have an culture of openness to differing perspectives and new ideas.

Finding 23: The culture of the Probation Department appears to discourage an open exchange of ideas and perspectives, which is essential for identifying critical issues and developing meaningful strategies.

It is difficult for any organization to strike an appropriate balance between allowing open discussion and debate of issues and alternative directions and conformance and loyalty to management approaches and directives. The following are comments made by Probation Department managers regarding the management culture

New managers feel intimidated to express their opinion. The wrong answer may be viewed that you are not a team player and may result in a reassignment.

The Department's leadership and culture could be improved by ensuring that the openness and transparency evident in the Adult Field Services Bureau is

practiced throughout the department, and by consistently focusing on identifying and fixing system problems before blaming poor outcomes on staff.

Open up discussion of programs and policies. Discussion is actively discouraged at meetings. Decisions are made without manager input.

The Department needs to create a nurturing work environment that promotes the team concept. The Department needs to get rid of "ego driven" managers that contribute to the undermining or stalling of progress, creativity, and purpose of mission.

Managers often compete amongst themselves and fail to work collaboratively. Many managers report feeling demoralized and beaten for operational failures that are occurring due to unduly heavy workloads and insufficient systems and staff.

When we speak up, we risk being viewed as complainers and people that are against change. We need for top management to really start listening - or quit asking us for input and start owning the operational failures themselves.

At the top levels, managers are openly competitive, disrespectful, and not unified. There is a sense of protecting one's territory, rewarding and protecting those that are loyal, and punishing those that have different opinions. People are afraid of top management. The image of retaliation and petty vengefulness needs to be addressed. It's demoralizing to lower level managers and staff.

The Chief Probation Officer needs to unify his Bureau Chiefs. This will create an environment of a true team effort. The new Chief appears to be an effective leader with a clear vision.

Recommendation 20: The Probation Department should work towards an organizational culture that encourages open and constructive discussion and debate on Department issues and strategies.

Finding 24: The management of the Probation Department is viewed as substantially disconnected from the actual delivery of service with little understanding of actual processes or level of effort required to deliver service.

It is common for managers located at a central headquarters operation to become disconnected with the day-to-day field operations of an organization. It is even more common for employees to feel that headquarters management is disconnected from their operations.

In our interviews and focus group meetings with Probation Department employees we found there is a prevalent feeling the management is out of touch with the "real world" of their operations. Numerous complaints were made about the infrequency of visits from members of the management team. Other frequent complaints were made about the inconsistency between management direction and what was practical to implement at the field level. The perspective was essentially they cannot understand what we do if

they are directing me to do it this way. One Probation Manager suggested: "The leadership and culture can improve by frequent site visits in various areas by the executives. This will improve moral and bring operations closer to the executive staff and help in sharing the vision and strategic direction."

Recommendation 21: The Probation Department should consider requiring headquarters managers to spend the equivalent of at least one shift per quarter in a direct service delivery operation or capacity.

Linkages with External Organizations

The Probation Department is dependant on numerous other County Department's to provide services in support of its operations. Specifically, the Office of Education is responsible for providing classes, the Department of Health Services is responsible for providing medical care, and the Department of Mental Health is responsible for providing mental health services to Probation juveniles at the juvenile halls and camps. These Departments have common or complementary missions to that of the Probation Department.

Finding 25: The Probation Department has established effective linkages with many County operational departments that have common missions.

Our sense is that effective cross-department teams and efforts have been well established at the juvenile halls and camps. These teams, for the most part, work well together and have established mechanisms for coordinating activities and addressing issues that cross organizational lines at the direct service delivery level. These efforts include the Office of Education, the Department of Health Services, and the Department of Mental Health. Superintendents at the Juvenile Halls include the on-site leadership of these organizations in their regular staff meetings and consider them to be critical members of their team. Our impression from our site visits to these facilities was that these were positive and effective relationships.

Recommendation 22: The Probation Department should continue to develop effective linkages and partnerships with other organizations that share or support the Probation Department's mission.

Role and Use of Advisory Groups

Advisory groups can be an effective means for identifying issues, for developing support for directions and initiatives, and for communicating to key constituents.

Finding 26: The Probation Department effectively participates in a broad range of advisory groups.

The advisory groups participated in by the Probation Department include:

✓ **Probation Commission** – is the principal advisory group to the Department and Chief Probation Officer. The Commission has 15 members, each serving 4 year terms. It meets 24 times per year on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month. The focus of the Commission is on the young wards in County juvenile detention institutions, encouraging programs where the aim is to modify the behavior of minors and work to redirect them back into the mainstream. The Chief Probation Officer or designated representative participates in all meetings.

✓ **Commission for Children and Families** - is comprised of 15 members; three nominated by each County Supervisor. Meetings are held at least once per month, with a maximum of 24 in any calendar year. The Commission is responsible for reviewing all programs administered by the County where program services are provided for at-risk youth, receiving input from groups and parties concerned about child service programs and making recommendations to other County departments to help improve children services.

✓ **Children's Planning Council** - is a 48-member collaborative group created in 1991 of County, governmental and private sector members to "promote, coordinate and evaluate the effectiveness of programs for children. The Chief Probation Officer is an ex-officio member of this council, along with representatives from 13 other County departments – Nineteen other members from represented entities such as Service Planning Area Councils, Chamber of Commerce and Commission for Children, Youth and their Families. General meetings are held six times per calendar year at intervals to be determined in January. Individual committees for various related activities, of which there are currently 20, meet on an as-needed basis. The goal of the council is to "build stronger and more effective linkages between the government and community and improve planning efforts to increase the probability of successful actions that enhance child and family." This County-wide public/private collaborative is dedicated toward improving the lives of children by encouraging partnerships, promoting the use of data, developing resources/tools and emphasizing the importance of outcomes and results.

✓ **Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee (CCJCC)** – is a 52-member commission with 20 subcommittees and working groups aimed at promoting improvements in the local criminal justice system and to foster interagency cooperation and coordination. This group meets on the third Wednesday of each month. The Committee's primary goal is to improve the criminal justice system in the County through greater coordination and cooperation at the local level, develop system wide strategies and funding priorities, improve day-to day coordination of local criminal justice agencies and act as the local coordinating and planning body for the new Criminal Justice Block Grant Program under the Department of Justice.

✓ **Presiding Judge, Children's Court** - On a bi-weekly basis (every other Friday afternoon), the Chief Probation Officer meets with Presiding Judge, Michael Nash to review issues and concerns related to minors. There is no formal agenda established for these meetings as the subject matter discussed is primarily related to the rehabilitation of minors coming through the children's court system.

✓ **L.A. Youth Justice Coalition** - This is group comprised mostly of former probationers in youth detention who have met with Chief Paul Higa two times over the past three months. The coalition mobilizes youth, parents and other interested community members to deal with race and class inequities in the juvenile justice system though organizing, advocacy and education. There is typically no established agenda and the meetings are very informal in nature – (In recent meeting held the week of July 11th, an agenda was sent stating that the meeting was to discuss "conditions in juvenile hall, California Youth Authority and the treatment of youth/conditions in local jails".

✓ **New Directions Task Force** - is comprised of directors from key County departments, plus additional local entities, whose charge is to move forward the County's service integration agenda by setting policy in support of the Board's instruction to design a seamless service delivery model, particularly relating to children and families. It was formed by the Board of Supervisors and has two major initiatives that it is forwarding; 1) Special Needs Housing Alliance, and 2) Faith-Based Organization Collaboration Council. The membership's roster for these two initiatives is comprised of various representatives of the agencies that are part of the NDTF.

The following represents the various other County-related committees and/or groups where the Chief Probation Officer is invited and should he be unable to attend will alternatively send a representative in his place:

✓ Sybil Brand Commission for Institutional Inspections of Los Angeles County
✓ Narcotics and Dangerous Drug Commission
✓ Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN)

Finding 27: The Probation Department could benefit from advisory groups representing specific Probation Department constituent groups.

While the Probation Department participates in a number of County-wide advisory groups and commissions, it could potentially benefit from advisory groups focused specifically on the Probation Department constituents. Three constituent groups are particularly important to the Probation Department – judges, law enforcement, and the child welfare advocacy community.

Judges – The Chief Probation Officer meets routinely with the Presiding Judge of Children's Court. However, the Probation Department provides services to all the

criminal courts in the County. The Department could potentially benefit from increased input and improved communication with these courts.

Law Enforcement – The Sheriff's Department and local police departments in the County have missions and operations that are complementary to the Probation Departments. The effectiveness of the Probation Department can also have a tremendous impact on the work load and operations of these law enforcement agencies. The Probation Department could potentially benefit from increased input and improved communication with these law enforcement agencies.

Child Welfare Advocacy Community – There are numerous organizations that advocate for improved child welfare. While these organizations have intentions similar to the Probation Department's regarding child welfare, they are often in adversarial positions. The Probation Department could potentially benefit from increased input and improved communication with these advocacy groups.

Recommendation 23: The Probation Department should consider initiating advisory groups representing County judges, law enforcement agencies, and the child welfare community.

Management and Employee Survey Results Related to Organization Structure and Leadership

Our approach to evaluating the Probation Department's organization structure and leadership included administering two surveys - one of Department managers and one of all Department employees. The following exhibits display the results of these surveys related to organization structure and leadership are referred to throughout this section of the report. More detailed results are available in the *Los Angeles County Probation Department 2005 Management Survey Report* and the *Los Angeles County Probation Department 2005 Employee Survey Report,* which is available for review from the Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller's Office.

Exhibit 7:

Management Survey Responses – Organization Structure and Leadership
Percentages Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing

Statement	Percentage
Staff Reporting to Me Appropriate	77%
Management Layers Facilitates Management	60%
Management Layers Facilitates Communication	52%
Important Functions Appropriately Place	74%
Little or No Duplication	36%
Appropriate Control Over Operations	68%
Authority Consistent With Responsibility	78%
Centralization vs. Decentralization	63%
Clear Lines of Authority	69%
Encourages Project Ownership	67%
Minimizes Fragmented Decision Making	55%

Source: 2005 Survey of Probation Department Managers
Note: The above chart shows the percentage of Department managers that responded they either strongly agree or agree with the statement. The remaining percentage responded they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Exhibit 8

Employee Survey Responses – Organization Structure and Leadership
Percentages Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing

Statement	Percentage
Supervisor Knowledgeable/Provides Guidance	80%
Supervisor Asks for my Input	77%
Suggestions/Opinions Valued by Supervisor	77%
Trust my Supervisor	79%
Trust my Division/Work Site Management	68%
Trust Bureau Management	60%
Teamwork in my Division/Work Site	82%
Teamwork in my Bureau	70%
Teamwork Among Bureaus	64%
Employees I Work With High Caliber	76%
Chain of Command in Unit Clear	85%
Can Communicate with my Management	89%
Can Communicate with Bureau Management	68%
Information Shared Open and Direct	72%
Receive Info so I Know What is Going On	64%
Dept Responsive to Changing Needs	49%
Org Structure in Unit Efficient/Effective	63%
Continuous Improvement Emphasized	74%

Source: 2005 Survey of Probation Department Employees
Note: The above chart shows the percentage of Department employees that responded they either strongly agree or agree with the statement. The remaining percentage responded they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

4. AUTOMATED SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGY

The review of the Probation Department's use of automated systems and technology was analyzed in the context of how well the Information Technology Bureau supported the key responsibilities and strategies of the Probation Department. Information relating to this objective was gathered via interviews with technical staff, review of documentation, and from responses to questions contained in both the Employee and Management surveys.

Since the Department had already set in motion plans to correct many of the existing system and technology deficiencies initially identified, the review was expanded to include an assessment of other critical success factors needed to ensure that the technology and systems implementations would be successful. These included a review of the level of end user involvement in defining system requirements; the implementation status of IT management processes and tools needed to develop, support and maintain the new capabilities once developed; and the availability of required staff, skills and facilities to support and maintain the evolving technologies.

In this section of the management audit we evaluated the Los Angeles County Probation Department's use of automated systems and technology. Consistent with the Scope of Work defined by the Request for Proposals we focused on the following areas:

- ✓ Restricting access to current systems to staff with the need to use them
- ✓ Incorporation of the most current technology
- ✓ Identification of areas to update technology and how that would improve the efficiency/effectiveness of the Department
- ✓ Access to current, useful data
- ✓ Completeness and compliance with Federal and State mandates
- ✓ Ability to share data with other jurisdictions and coordinating agencies
- ✓ Automation plan including currency and identification of opportunities for automation
- ✓ Use of the Internet to support customer service

Finding 28: The Probation Department's Information Systems function is positioned organizationally at a level in the Department that allows it to effectively participate in the development and implementation of key Departmental strategies.

The Probation Department has an internal Information Technology Bureau that exists at an organizational level comparable to the other major operational and staff functions of the Department. This is a relatively recent reporting change, and gives the Bureau the needed status to effectively participate as part of the Probation Department's top management team in developing key organizational strategies and then determining how technology can best be used support these strategies.

The Bureau has approximately 60 budgeted positions and also relies on the Internal Services Department of the County for operation and technical support of the major Adult and Juvenile case management systems, the backbone data network used to interconnect the more than 60 departmental locations, Email and Internet services, as well as the operation of most production servers. A majority of the new large scale systems development is done by private sector contractors. Internal departmental staff is responsible for internal networks, PC hardware and software, customer support functions, PC application development, Internet/Intranet development as well as functional support of the Adult and Juvenile Case Management Systems.

Existing Information Systems Environment

Finding 29: The information systems currently utilized by the Probation Department have evolved over time, are outdated, and were developed without a consistent technical architecture.

The Department currently uses nearly 60 automated systems as well as numerous smaller standalone or special purpose systems that are primarily PC based. Most of these systems are written in obsolete languages and technologies and were developed over time without a unified Departmental information architecture, and consequently, without consideration for integration of data and functions across the Department.

There are two separate systems for Adult and Juvenile case management, supported and maintained by separate technical teams. The technologies presently used are dated, and the systems are 12 to 15 years old. While the Adult and Juvenile case management systems operate on state of the art mainframe computers, the software languages and data base systems used for the applications are obsolete. As such, technical staff support is difficult to acquire and software changes are difficult to make. It also means that the software architectures are not compatible with newer open system standards and further hinders the integration and analysis of data across the various operational systems.

Surprisingly, and in spite of the above issues, nearly 80% of the respondents to the Employee Survey still indicated that they had the support from automated systems and technology needed to be effective and efficient in their work. However, when the responses for the Management, Administrative, and Information Technology Bureaus were removed, a different picture emerged. There was a wide disparity in the satisfaction levels amongst the remaining organizational units with Adult Field Services having an approval rating of nearly 90%, while the other Juvenile related Bureau's had generally lower ratings with the Residential Treatment Bureau rating of only 63%. Although not discussed until later in this section, these results would tend to validate the priorities being used by the Department to address systems and technology deficiencies.

Recommendation 24: The Probation Department should consider the use of Data Warehousing and Geographical Information Systems technologies to facilitate the aggregation and analysis of data contained in disparate systems both as an interim strategy to achieve better data integration, and for the longer term, as a management analysis and reporting tool.

Planned Information Systems Environment

Finding 30: The Probation Department has developed a Business Automation Plan (BAP) to guide the upgrading of its information systems capabilities.

The BAP for Probation defines the Department's technology strategies which are linked to the Department's Strategic Plan as well as the key technology goals set out in the County's IT Guiding Principles. The BAP discusses these strategies and defines the general steps planned over the next three-year period to work toward the long-term objective of upgrading the Department's information systems capabilities. The BAP also contains a more detailed operating plan with specific projects for the current fiscal year. The development of an annual BAP for County Departments is a requirement of the County CIO's Office.

The following is a more detailed discussion of the four basic IT strategies being pursued for the 2005 through 2008 time period.

IT Strategy 1: Provide Ubiquitous Secured Network and System Access

This is a strategy to acquire and install the needed equipment and software, and to build a multifunctional data network capable of providing every Probation Department employee with the infrastructure required to gain access to existing and planned information and services.

Technology Upgrades

Finding 31: The Probation Department does not routinely budget adequate funds for PC replacement to sustain a three to four year replacement cycle, and utilizes budgetary savings at year-end to replace as many as funding will allow.

The Department has been aggressively trying to replace and install personal computers (PCs) for all employees with the need. At present, approximately 4,000 of the 5,000 department employees have access to needed equipment, Email, and the Intranet site (ProbNet). Many of the existing PCs and software are out of date and will not support the strategy of moving all information access and communication to the WEB technology. There is a stated objective of having all existing equipment upgraded by the end of 2005 to the latest Windows XP software; and thereafter, maintain a three to four year replacement cycle. There is no County-wide standard replacement cycle for PCs.

It is important to emphasize that delivering services via WEB technology no longer relegates the PC to a personal workstation, but instead makes it a key part of the entire enterprise computing complex along with a robust data network and the required application servers. As such, the refreshing of the technology for PCs will be as critical as the replacement of all the other elements of the deployed technologies.

Recommendation 25: The Probation Department should consider developing a formal replacement schedule for all equipment to ensure that adequate funds are available annually to continually refresh the technology base. Also, the Department might consider alternative financing or leasing arrangements that level the annual expenditure requirements.

Recommendation 26: The Probation Department should consider conducting a requirements and capacity analysis of the required data network to ensure that it will have sufficient capacity to support the planned deployment of the newer network intensive technologies.

Security and Data Access Management

Finding 32: The Department has no formal Data Access, Email retention, or Business Continuity plans.

Security management is a complex issue for Criminal Justice agencies such as the Probation Department. There is always a need to strike a balance between the need to prevent unauthorized access and disclosure of sensitive information, while at the same time ensuring that the access requirements are not too restrictive as to prevent persons with the need from accessing information required to perform their job functions effectively. There are also ongoing requirements that are part of comprehensive security management which include the monitoring of network and data access to detect and report when security violations occur, the setting and monitoring of appropriate data retention cycles to ensure that only valid and current data is used as a basis for decisions and actions, and the protection of the data itself to guard against its loss or corruption.

There is also a statutory need to conform to State of California requirements for access to the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS) and Department of Justice Criminal History System via the Sheriff's Justice Data Interface Controller (JDIC), as well as adherence to rules regarding the storage and logging of access to criminal history records in general. Currently, approximately 1,400, or approximately 40% of staff within the Department have access rights to JDIC.   Access to State systems is routinely monitored by the State to identify potential access abuses. Any suspected abuses are reported to the Department and turned over and investigated by the Department's Internal Investigations Section. Historically, the State has also

conducted annual on-site audits to review security and training procedures, although these have been sporadic in recent years due to funding issues. The most recent audit of the Department was conducted during the early part of 2005, and findings were primarily related to lack of training issues.

The Department has heightened awareness of the need for data security, and currently uses a manual procedure to control the approval or revocation of access to more than two dozen systems and information sources used by the Department. The procedure requires that the user, his or her Supervisor, a Director, and in selected instances, the Bureau Chief approve of the accesses granted. The Department has developed appropriate system and usage guidelines, but there is no routine monitoring of appropriate usage for internal systems, and there is no specific person or unit responsible for all aspects of data security for the Department. Access is controlled via the use of conventional individual password security measures with required periodic password change procedures.

Recommendation 27: The Probation Department should consider giving a high priority to the hiring of personnel approved in the 2005-2006 Fiscal Year Budget to develop and monitor security plans.

IT Strategy 2: Conduct Probation Business Electronically (E-Government)

Finding 33: The Probation Department has made substantial progress in using technology to improve efficiency and support customer service.

This strategy for the Department, and County in general, is to move all information systems to a WEB based architecture to allow easier access and sharing of information across County agencies, other service providers; and where appropriate, provide public access to services and information. Employing this strategy means that eventually all of the Departments' information resources and systems will become accessible via the Department's Intranet access portal, ProbNet. In addition, the ProbNet is already being used by the Department as the repository for information on internal procedures and processes, for the dissemination of information, and for supporting many of the internal administrative processes. As stated earlier, approximately 80% of the Departments' employees currently have access to ProbNet and Email, while approximately 50% have access to the Internet.

The Department has developed a KIOSK based Report-in-System that allows some 12,000 probationers to satisfy their monthly reporting requirement by visiting a departmental facility and signing onto the KIOSK. The KIOSK also allows for the basic collection of fees paid by probationers. There is also a community service Internet based reporting system that provides for reporting of hours spent by probationers as part of community service sentences. WEB based applications are also deployed to assist probation officers with the production of required Court Reports.

The Department also maintains an Internet site that provides information to the public on the organization and services provided. There is a project underway to streamline the maintenance of information on the WEB site by implementing content management software that allows for more timely decentralized input by various organizational units, while still ensuring consistency of look and feel for the site.

As stated earlier, this strategy is consistent with the overall County direction to move services to the WEB architecture. This will allow a more seamless interfacing between the Department and other County agencies once the goal for the entire County is realized. The single point of access via ProbNet being envisioned should also reduce training requirements for the Department by making the use of systems more user friendly, intuitive, and consistent. However, extensive use of the Internet by the Department to provide services directly to public is inherently limited due to the nature of the clients and services provided.

Recommendation 28: The Probation Department should consider the use of additional technologies such as Interactive Voice Response using the more prevalent public phone network to allow access to information and services where appropriate.

IT Strategy 3: Provide a Single Point of Access to Information (through the Department's Intranet – ProbNet); Develop an Integrated Probation System.

Finding 34: The Probation Department has a well articulated plan for upgrading its information systems and appears to have the support of most management personnel as a result of communicating its systems plans and soliciting input from them.

There is a multi-part strategy to develop an enterprise wide information architecture, redevelop virtually all applications consistent with that architecture, and provide access to those functions through ProbNet as mentioned previously. This initiative includes a series of projects to develop a comprehensive case management system that will contain both adults and juveniles, an enterprise document management and workflow system, development of improved interfaces to other justice and non justice agencies, and a more integrated administrative support system. This strategy should also allow the Department to simplify their environment by reducing the number of systems to be maintained and coordinated, and provide tighter integration of data and functions. Once completed, these initiatives are intended to improve information availability, reduce the costs of duplicate data entry and systems support while concurrently maintaining and reconciling information contained in numerous separate and disparate systems.

The specific projects and milestones envisioned to complete the Department's goal of a single access point to information are as follows:

➢ Development of an Enterprise model for data structures and standards for both data base and application development.

➢ Development of standards for system interfaces both internal and external to the department.

➢ Initiating software redevelopment of the Juvenile Module of the case management system, and later expand it to include Adult functionality. The final comprehensive system will become the Department's consolidated Probation Case Management System (PCMS).

The specifications for the initial modules for the Juvenile Institution portion of the PCMS have been developed. The Field module or second module is in the final specification review phase and awaiting the approval of a sole source contract for development with the same company doing the first module. The delivery of the software for the Juvenile portion of the PCMS is planned for the summer of 2006, with implementation taking another year. After that, the Adult portion of the system will be developed.

As stated earlier, the priorities for redevelopment of systems by beginning with the Juvenile Modules are supported by the Employee survey results which indicated the lowest level of satisfaction was in the Juvenile areas.

➢ Purchase of a document management and workflow management system that will improve the flow of documents within Probation and between Probation and the Courts, and become the repository for all departmental criminal justice case related paperwork. This system is being referred to as the Probation Electronic Document Management System (PEDMS), and will improve upon the 377 step workflow for the production, distribution, and retention of approximately 2.7 million court reports prepared annually.

This system has completed a pilot test in one of the area Probation offices and preliminary results indicate that the PEDMS has met most of the design requirements, but the ability to directly send reports and have them printed at the courts has met with resistance from the court because of staffing issues. The training and rollout of the system to other area Probation offices is in process.

The generic document management and workflow engine already acquired could also be used in the future to automate other complex workflow and approval processes throughout the Department.

➢ Development of the standardized interfaces between PCMS and other County Justice agencies, including the Sheriff, District Attorney, Superior Courts as well as non justice agencies such as schools, Health Services, Mental Health, and drug testing results.

> ➢ Development of a more integrated administrative support system for the Department that builds upon the new County-wide eCAPS enterprise resource planning system and better supports the entire range of administrative needs for the Department.

The implementation of this strategy is lengthy and complex undertaking, and will require the ongoing support of all Departmental personnel to make it successful. This support will need to be maintained during the entire development cycle, which will take a minimum of five to seven years to fully complete, assuming adequate funding levels are maintained.

Results from the Management Survey indicates that approximately 90% of the managers were aware of the plans to upgrade the departments systems, with 60% indicating they had already provided input into the systems planning process. Written comments contained in the Employee Survey however indicate the level of understanding and sense of participation is not as pervasive for employees in general.

Recommendation 29: The Probation Department should also consider using the PEDMS imaging software and workflow engine to streamline and improve the responsiveness of other complex functional and administrative processes within the Department.

Recommendation 30: The Probation Department should consider formulating a communication plan that would periodically provide updates on the status of the systems improvement effort to all employees to build their support and acceptance of the changes required to fully implement the new systems.

IT Strategy 4: Improve Workforce Skills by Implementing E-Learning Solutions

Finding 35: The Probation Department has not developed a plan nor provided funding for development of the course materials for the E-Learning strategy.

This initiative supports the Departmental business goals of Service Excellence, Organizational Effectiveness, and Workforce Excellence by instituting the use of WEB based instructional software tools to facilitate cost effective, distributed, individually paced learning to complement the more structured classroom trainings.

In both the employee and manager surveys, the need for additional training for employees was identified as a real departmental need. However, interviews indicated that no significant effort was being directed toward using this technology as a strategy for meeting training needs. The acquisition of class authoring software in and of itself will provide no benefits until the resources and skills are applied to developing the course content.

Recommendation 24: The Probation Department should consider funding the development of course materials for the E-Learning solutions training program.

Other Technology Issues Identified

Throughout the interviews conducted with Information Systems Bureau personnel, the issue of technical staff shortages and the difficulty and time required for recruiting new personnel was a constant issue raised. There was also a perception that personnel in the Information Systems Bureau were not classified at the proper level commensurate with their duties or positions in relation to other County Departments. The Department clearly needs to develop a strategy for acquiring and retaining the new technical skill sets that will be required to maintain the newly developed systems, while recognizing that these skill sets will have a higher value both internal and external to the County. There were also issues raised concerning the lack of space and facilities in which the technical personnel were required to work. Approximately 40% of the employee survey responses from the Information Systems Bureau cited lack of space as an issue, while more than 30% also perceived lack of equipment as a problem.

Other deficiencies identified included the lack of investment in software tools needed to adequately support and manage the level of service and availability required by the Department. Three specific areas identified were: the lack of monitoring software for servers to determine and report when problems are occurring; lack of consolidated system and network monitoring tools to help identify system wide problems and resolve them in a more timely manner; and the lack of comprehensive help desk software needed to help identify equipment, software and training issues, and to facilitate the development of solutions that prevent or mitigate further occurrences. Without the proper tools, the Department will continue to address system problems in a reactive manner by first requiring the end user to encounter, identify, and report problem. Tools are available that help identify problems as they are occurring, and in many cases, have them reported and resolved before the end user is even aware a problem ever occurred. These tools have the potential for reducing problem determination times, while providing a higher level of service to end users.

The lack of management tools also has a negative impact on the Department's ability to implement effective IT management processes. These management and control processes are primarily internal to the Information Systems function, but have significant impact on the entire organization by ensuring that high levels of predictable and sustainable services are provided. While the assessment of the current state of development of these processes for the Department was not within the scope of this audit, there are management models and information on best practices readily available that could help the Department gauge the effectiveness of existing processes.

Recommendation 25: The Probation Department should consider conducting an overall assessment of the Information Systems Bureau to address personnel acquisition, retention, staffing and skill level issues; facility requirements; software tools required to effectively manage and control the operational

environment; and the implementation status of key IT management processes needed to effectively manage and control the more complex future technical environment. The Department may want to consider adopting the Information Technology Information Library (ITIL) model as a basis for assessing existing IT management processes and identification of best practices that may be implemented where deficiencies are identified.

5. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

The Probation Department's effectiveness is dependent on the effectiveness of its personnel that deliver the Department's services. Effectively managing and motivating these personnel is critical to the Department's success.

In this section of the management audit we evaluated the Los Angeles County Probation Department's personnel management. Consistent with the Scope of Work defined by the Request for Proposals we focused on the following areas:

- ✓ Recruiting and Selecting Personnel
- ✓ Background Investigations
- ✓ Internal Investigations
- ✓ Training Personnel
- ✓ Motivating Personnel
- ✓ Evaluating Personnel Performance
- ✓ Promoting Personnel
- ✓ Managing Personnel Turnover and Succession

Recruiting and Selecting Personnel

Personnel hiring practices should be designed to attract the highest quality and most-suitable candidates for open positions. Employee recruitment for entry-level Probation Department staff is currently being performed by only one individual working under the direction of the Affirmative Action Compliance Officer without an established budget for recruiting. The primary recruiting method for entry-level staff (DSO's DPO's and GSN's) consists of assorted outreach efforts to local colleges, universities, and high schools with participation in assorted career day events at these institutions and posting flyers on bulletin boards. Interested candidates are also invited to participate in regularly scheduled tours of juvenile hall facilities to observe first-hand the typical employee roles and activities. In addition, some targeted recruiting efforts have been made in the Hispanic and other under-represented communities through advertisements in local specific newspapers.

Job openings are posted on both the Department and County websites and there are currently plans underway for public service announcements in targeted underrepresented communities. Due to cost considerations, the Department has typically not posted job openings on Monster.com and efforts to recruit employees have rarely been attempted outside of the southern California. At one time, the Department also had a trade show exhibit for use at the L.A. County Fair, in conjunction with other justice agencies such as the Sheriff's Department and local police departments. However, a decision was reached last year to cease participation in the Fair due to the high costs involved in keeping the booth adequately staffed and its inability to attract enough qualified candidates. The Department also has a small brochure briefly

describing the duties of open positions used for distribution at recruiting events and other activities.

Upon submission of an application for a position, candidates are then required to complete a written examination developed and validated by the Board of Corrections which encompasses following written directions, reading comprehension, writing clarity, writing detail, accuracy and work attitude survey. Applicants who possess and declare any foreign language proficiency must also pass the County Bilingual Proficiency Test. Only those applicants who pass the written examination will be invited to an actual interview, which are scheduled on a recurring basis dependent upon the vacancies in a specific job category or class. The written test and interview comprise 100% of the total examination process and those candidates who receive a score of 70% or better will proceed to the selection process. Candidates are ranked into groups called bands, based upon their combined written test and interview scores. Candidates are offered positions in the order of their ranking in the bands until all open positions have been filled. Once a conditional offer of employment has been made the following steps are taken:

> ➢ A thorough background investigation is conducted, as prescribed by law, including a fingerprint search. Applicants must be qualified to hold a Peace officer position to work with juveniles.
> ➢ A pre-employment medical examination is required, which includes a psychological test. Candidates must be able to meet the Count's standards for Class "IV" Arduous work.
> ➢ Swearing or affirmation to the oath of civil defense and public employees is required, as prescribed by law.
> ➢ Verification of education and experience claimed.

Finding 36: Current Probation Department recruiting efforts are not yielding qualified candidates for sworn or civilian positions.

The issue of finding suitable qualified candidates primarily in the deputized ranks has been an on-going concern for the Department. In particular, finding suitable sworn rank candidates with bi-lingual capabilities and new hires possessing good writing skills were noted as specific deficiencies in this regard. Over the twelve-month period ending March 2005, there were 198 new staff hired into the Department and approximately 615 background investigations were initiated.

Recruiting qualified employment candidates received the lowest rating in our survey of Probation Department managers. Only 15 percent of managers agreed that recruiting provides high quality candidates.

A number of concerns were also raised that the amount of time involved to complete background investigations was too lengthy. The time required has often resulted in many potentially viable candidates choosing to accept opportunities with other justice system agencies. Equally, since many entry-level GSN and DSO positions are only offered on an "as-needed" basis, many qualified individuals will look for opportunities

offering the potential of better security outside of Probation. In the case of various civilian positions, comments were also raised that the pay ranges for many jobs are often lower with the Probation Department in comparison to most other County departments.

Recommendation 32: The Probation Department should consider strengthening its recruitment efforts by consolidating the recruitment, outreach, and hiring functions in the Personnel Division; enhancing targeted regional recruitment; and establishing the recruitment function as a formal organizational unit with a designated budget and staffing level.

Finding 37: The move to open competitive recruitment and selection for all positions, and away from the traditional single-entry track for Department employees is positive.

The Department's principal hiring method for sworn staff into the Department has traditionally been a "single-entry track" for detention officer positions through the institutions (halls) and camps, then movement to field assignments and promotion to DPOII status. The number of new peace officers alternatively brought in directly into area offices has historically been limited to rehires and some transfers from other County departments, since the Probation Department has had a very small number of open examinations for these positions since 1980.

The traditional practice of only using the "single-entry track" for recruiting staff has clearly demonstrated not to be the best mechanism of attracting good quality candidates. Furthermore, since a promotion to Deputy Probation Officer I (generally two years) requires a move to a field assignment, another level of staff turnover is being created which adversely impacts Department operations.

In May 2005 the Department implemented open competitive exams for most of its key positions (DPO I-Camps, DSO, DPO I-Field, and DPO II-Treatment and Counseling), as well as changing the focus from Departmental promotional exams to open competitive exams.

Recommendation 33: The Probation Department should fully implement its initiative to move toward open competitive recruitment and selection for key Department positions.

Background Investigations

The majority of the Probation Department's employees are certified peace officers. This peace officer status gives these employees substantial authority both on and off duty, and requires a substantial level of care in selecting and screening employees. One part of providing this level of care is conducting an investigation into the background of potential Department employees to ensure potential employees:

✓ Do not have a criminal record of serious offenses
✓ Have the integrity and character necessary to represent the Department
✓ Have accurately reflected their educational and work history.

The Probation Department currently conducts background investigations of potential employees once an offer of employment has been made and accepted. The following are the key steps involved in conducting these background investigations.

1. Candidates selected for employment are sent a "Personal Information Statement" which they are required to complete and return. The statement includes sections to provide information on employment, residence, education, military, organization affiliation, arrests, motor vehicle record, drug activity, and gang activity. Statement's that are received incomplete are returned to the candidate to complete. The background investigation is termed "pending" until the complete statement is returned.

2. Once the complete "Personal Information Statement" is received a "system check" is performed to determine if the candidate has a history of arrests or detentions, an acceptable driving record, and outstanding tickets. This check is accomplished primarily through the JDIC (Justice Data Interface Controller) system provided by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. The primary function of JDIC is to provide County law enforcement agencies instant access to local, state and federal data files and communication throughout the County, state and nation. A check of Department of Motor Vehicle records and the L.A. County Courts' system is also performed.

3. Letters are sent to current and previous employers to verify employment including their assessments of the candidate's honesty and integrity, attendance history, and job performance. Background investigators attempt to verify employment history for the past 5 years. A second request letter is sent if no response is received to the first letter. The background investigation may be put into the pending category until the verification is received, or may be recommended for approval to hire, or to withhold hiring, based on information received through the system check.

4. If the results of the "systems checks" are positive, and the Personal Information Statement is complete and the background investigators may recommend that the candidate be given a "conditional clearance," with a final clearance given once employment verification information has been returned.

5. If the results of the "systems checks" are not positive, the background investigators may recommend that approval to hire the candidate be withheld.

The Background Investigations Unit is currently staffed with three investigators and 1 clerical support staff. During FY 2004-05 a total of 655 background investigations of employment candidates were initiated. Of the investigations completed 89 percent resulted in recommendations for approval to hire, and 11 percent resulted in recommendations to withhold approval to hire.

Finding 38: Probation Department background investigations are not sufficient to ensure persons hired do not have a criminal history, are of sufficient character, and have an appropriate educational and employment history.

The limited system check for criminal activity may not reveal serious criminal activity of candidates for employment. For example, if a potential employee has committed certain serious crimes in counties other than Los Angeles the JDIC system check will not reveal these crimes. It is common practice to at minimum request the jurisdiction where the candidate lives or has lived to conduct a check of their Local Arrest Records to determine if the candidate has been arrested in that jurisdiction. This is especially important for candidates that currently or previously lived in another state.

Many public safety agencies conduct a credit history check on candidates for employment as part of their background investigation. Credit history checks can provide insight into a potential employee's integrity and character. Many public safety agencies also perform drug testing on employment candidates, as well as polygraph examinations. These provide additional controls as well as additional information into the potential employee's character and background.

Recommendation 35: The Probation Department should consider strengthening background investigations prior to hiring employment candidates including:

- ✓ ***Expanded criminal history checks***
- ✓ ***Credit history checks of candidates***
- ✓ ***Drug testing of candidates***
- ✓ ***Polygraph examination of candidates***

Finding 39: Probation Department background investigations are limited to checking information available in current systems, and do not include any field investigations or verifications.

There are approximately 300 background investigations that are pending. Many of these are pending because information requested from third parties such as previous employers has not been received. In addition, many of the responses received from previous employers are incomplete. Responses are often limited to providing dates of employment only, and do not provide any capability or job performance information.

Conducting field background investigations, including reviewing actual personnel files of previous employers, could both resolve many of the pending investigations and enhance the quality of these investigations.

Recommendation 36: The Probation Department should consider including field investigations and information verification capabilities and practices to strengthen and facilitate completion of background investigations prior to hiring employment candidates.

Internal Investigations

Public safety organizations have a responsibility to maintain a high level of integrity commensurate with the level of public trust given to these organizations. Such organizations also have a greater risk of corruption, abuse of authority, and other acts of misconduct given their function and authority over others.

Maintaining a high level of integrity requires that allegations of misconduct be thoroughly and effectively investigated and appropriate action taken.

Finding 40: Internal investigations are split between the Internal Affairs Unit in the Administration Bureau, the Special Investigations Unit, internal investigations conducted by each individual bureau, and the Office of Affirmative Action Compliance.

Allegations of Probation Department employee misconduct are currently investigated in four different ways.

- ✓ Internal Affairs Investigations – The Probation Department's Internal Affairs Unit conducts investigations of allegations made directly to the Internal Affairs Unit, referred to the Unit by a bureau, the Auditor Controller, or an outside agency.
- ✓ Bureau Investigations – Individual bureaus of the Department can decide to conducts investigations of allegations of misconduct or citizen complaints first made to personnel within a bureau of the Department.   There is no requirement to report many of these investigations to Internal Affairs or any other body outside of the bureau.
- ✓ Special Enforcement Investigations – The newly formed Special Enforcement Unit, reporting to the Chief Probation Officer, conducts investigations of employee excessive use of force or child abuse allegations within the Department's detention halls and camps.
- ✓ Sexual Harassment / Discrimination Investigations - Allegations of sexual harassment or discrimination are investigated by the Departments Office of Affirmative Action Compliance.

There is little coordination among these investigative functions, and no central tracking of all complaints or allegations made. Complaints and allegations against Probation Department employees can be extremely important for identifying problematic employees or employees that have recurring problems.   Many public safety organizations use this type of information as the basis for "early warning" systems to identify potential problem employees and develop an appropriate intervention strategy.

Finding 41: Probation Department internal investigative functions do not have the independence or authority necessary to conduct effective internal investigations.

Given the importance of internal investigations it is fairly standard practice in public safety agencies to assign the internal investigative function as a staff function to the

Chief. This provides the function with the authority necessary to carry out often sensitive and difficult investigations. It also takes the function outside of the bureau chain of command and avoids any potential conflict of interest associated with investigations within that bureau. The Internal Affairs Unit has conducted investigations of personnel that were within the same bureau and above them in the chain of command.

Recommendation 37: The Probation Department should consider consolidating the current Internal Investigations Unit, Special Enforcement Unit, and Discipline Unit into a Professional Standards Unit reporting directly to the Chief Probation Officer.

Finding 42: The Probation Department lacks the authority and ability to conduct investigations into criminal activity involving Probation Department employees.

Many of the allegations made against Probation Department employees are criminal in nature. These include child abuse or excessive use of force, taking money or other gratuities under the color of authority, falsifying reports or other documents, etc. The current authority of the Department's Internal Affairs Unit, and other investigative functions, is limited to conducting administrative investigations. The penalties that can be imposed through these types of investigations are limited to employee discipline ranging from warnings and reprimands to termination.

Criminal investigations are conducted on Probation Department employees by outside law enforcement agencies, the District Attorney, and the Auditor Controller. However, for many of the allegations that rise to the level of a crime there is no investigation. This is primarily due to issues of jurisdiction.

Many law enforcement agencies will not conduct a criminal investigation of an alleged crime that occurs on another agency's premises. For example, a local police department is unlikely to pursue a criminal investigation of child abuse that occurs at a Probation Department camp, presuming that the Department would conduct such a criminal investigation themselves. Many allegations of criminal activity by Probation Department employees only result in administrative investigations and are not pursued criminally.

Recommendation 38: The Probation Department should consider entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Los Angeles County Sheriff or the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office to conduct criminal investigations of Probation Department personnel that would typically be investigated by local law enforcement agencies.

Training Personnel

Ensuring employees are adequately trained is important for the success of any organization. Training in a public safety organization is especially important – ensuring employees are up to date in legal and operational requirements and approaches.

Training within the Probation Department generally received low ratings by both Department managers and employees in our surveys. Only 29 percent of Department managers agreed that training provided was effective, and only 43 percent felt managers were sufficiently trained or experienced. Only 19 percent agreed that staff were trained in administrative functions.

Employees felt more positively about their training, with 70 percent agreeing they had received the training they need. A similar number, 69 percent, agreed they are encouraged to develop their skills. Fewer employees, 55 percent, agreed that the Department encourages professional growth.

The majority of Probation Department employees are required by the State Board of Corrections Standards and Training for Corrections (STC) Program to have completed a basic core training within their first year, and to receive ongoing annual training.

Finding 43: The Probation Department's training of newly sworn staff and newly promoted supervisors and managers is out of compliance with training requirements.

Until July 2003 the Probation Department provided required core training for newly sworn staff and newly promoted supervisors and managers through the West Los Angeles Community College. The College program was a cooperative effort between the College and the Department, with three Department employees loaned to the College. Funding was provided through reimbursement by the STC Program and direct student full time equivalent (FTE) funding to the College from the State.

In July 2003, as part of an effort to balance the State budget, all funding or reimbursement for STC training was eliminated. In the case of Los Angeles County, this equated to a cut in annual funding in excess of $2 million.   This funding cut further resulted in a reduction of the Department's Training Division to a "skeleton" staffing for this function from nine to two staff members. This funding had also been used to essentially pay the tuition for Department employees at West Los Angeles Community College. With this cut the College program was eliminated.

For the period from September 2003 through April 2005 training of new sworn staff was limited to a seven-day survival training program covering areas such as ethical decisions, the juvenile justice system, sexual harassment, the use of OC spray, and medical and psychological problem solving.   There are currently between 280 and 300 sworn Department employees that have not received the required 150 hours of basic training within their first year.

Many of these newly hired personnel continue in their Probation assignments without being properly prepared in the knowledge of their specific job duties, Department practices/procedures and regulations. In addition, the Department's ability to attract and maintain the most qualified staff is being further compromised by the lack of an adequate process and method for training new staff. Also, during the period that the training was not provided by West Los Angeles Community College, individual bureaus were forced to develop their own substitute training programs such as the training facility for Detention Services and training camp for the Residential Treatment Services.

Similar basic training requirements exist for both new supervisors and new managers. This required training was also not being provided between September 2003 and April 2005. There are currently approximately 25 supervisors and approximately 21 managers out of compliance with these requirements.

As of April 2005 the Department entered into a new agreement with West Los Angeles Community College, and they are currently running core required training classes back-to-back.

Recommendation 39: The Probation Department should continue to work to bring training of newly sworn and newly promoted staff into compliance with requirements.

Finding 44: The Probation Department's ongoing staff training for both sworn and civilian employees is not adequate.

All deputized employee are required to attend annual training. A catalog of coursework is maintained by the STC and the Department. The Department submits an Annual Training Plan to the STC each year. This plan lists job classification categories, numbers of positions, scheduled training hours and the total hours per category. Typically, annual training can be a variety of course designed for improved skill development such as; crisis management, CPR, suicide prevention, first aid and customer service. The minimum requirements consist of:

➢ 40 hours per year for all Deputized Staff, Managers and Supervisors
➢ 24 hours per year for all Camp and Juvenile Hall line staff and transportation deputies.

As it the case with initial training activities, the cutbacks in STC funding has caused the Department to dramatically adjust their ongoing training programs. Specifically, with the reduction in training staff, a strategy of using staff from the bureaus as trainers was implemented. There was an emphasis placed on "training the trainers" who in turn returned to their facilities to train the rest of the staff. In addition, eight hour training courses were broken down into two-hour increments so that training could be accomplished as part of normal working hours.

Without adequate resources being dedicated toward on-going training activities, Probation Department staff will be unable to properly satisfy their annual requirement for training. Training efforts have become less structured and more informal as the individual bureaus have been forced to provide their own specific training activities, thereby also adversely impacting the ability to provide quality services. Training for non-sworn and clerical staff is basically limited to County-wide staff training classes offered by County Human Resources. Equally, required training for important topics such as sexual harassment, crisis management, youth-on-youth violence and specialized supervisory staff training is should be a priority offering by the Department.

Recommendation 40: The Probation Department should consider developing an integrated, agency-wide, training system for both sworn and civilian staff

Motivating Personnel

Management needs to ensure that employees are properly motivated to perform their tasks at the highest level and that their activities are in line with organization expectations and directives.

Finding 48: Although most Probation Department employees feel that the Department is a good place to work, most feel the morale of Department employees is low.

Most employees (74 percent) agreed they feel positive about the Probation Department, and most also agreed the Department is a good place to work in our employee survey. However, fewer than half (43 percent) of Probation Department employees agreed that the Department morale is good. Staff consistently voiced the desire for improved working conditions to include better advancement opportunities and fairer promotions, increased efforts to hold poor performers accountable, more training and more rewards for positive performance. Employees also stressed the need for improved communication from management and a better understanding of the program activities, processes and priorities.

A general lack of commitment by Department management toward addressing or improving perceived inequities or concerns regarding personnel related issues could perpetuate low morale throughout the organization. The potential also exists for good employees to become frustrated, disenchanted and ultimately result in service delivery issues or concerns.

Recommendation 41: The Probation Department should establish a working group of employees to develop specific strategies to improve the morale of Department employees.

Recommendation 42: The Probation Department should consider increasing its use of management-staff communication tools (i.e. newsletters, general staff e-

mails, regularly scheduled management-staff meetings, etc.) to help improve the flow of information regarding specific issues related to employee morale concerns.

Evaluating Personnel Performance

Regular evaluations of an employee's performance are an important way of keeping employees informed as to where they stand in relation to their immediate supervisor's expectations and documents how their performance compares to specific job standards. Probation Department employees should be given evaluations on an annual basis as required by the County Human Resources process.

Finding 49: Performance evaluations for Department staff are generally being completed in accordance with the time frames established by County guidelines.

The Probation Department follows the standardized employee performance evaluation process established by the County's Department of Human Resources. This process stipulates that employees are provided with a formal evaluation of their performance from their immediate supervisor on at least an annual basis. The due-date for completion of an employee's evaluation is the end of the month following the month of their birthday. On a bi-monthly basis, all managers responsible for performing employee evaluations are provided with a listing of evaluations due for the employee under their responsibility. When evaluations are completed, they are forwarded to personnel and information logged into CW-TAPPS before being placed into the appropriate employee's personnel file.

Approximately six weeks following the end of June and the end of December, a six month summary of performance evaluations completed is due to the office of the County's Department of Human Resources. This report lists the number of evaluations completed and the numbers of each specific category, i.e. Outstanding, Very good, Competent, Needs Improvement and Unsatisfactory. Typically, an aggressive effort is put forth at the end of June and December to properly ensure that all employee evaluations due during the previous six-month period had been completed on schedule.

The focus on ensuring evaluations are completed in a timely manger is reflected in the Employee Survey responses. The majority (83 percent) of Probation Department employees agreed that their performance evaluations were completed on time.

Recommendation 43: The Probation Department should continue to monitor and track completion of employee evaluations to ensure they continue to be completed in a timely manner.

Finding 50: Probation Department performance evaluation ratings appear inflated or reflect very low standards.

Only about .5 percent of Probation Department employees were rated "Needs Improvement" or "Unsatisfactory" on their performance completed during 2004. The remaining 99.5 percent of Department employees were evaluated as Competent (36.5 percent), Very Good (50 percent), or Outstanding (13 percent). Performance evaluations of managers appear to be similarly inflated – with 90 percent of managers currently rated as exceptional.

In many cases, it would appear that the employee evaluation process may have become too routine and mechanical. Conversely, only 40% of employees surveyed are agreed that poor performers are held accountable for their work and only 34% agreed that good work is properly recognized.

Without honest feedback from supervisors in the evaluation process, the assessment for exceptional or competent performers may be inaccurately categorized. Further, inconsistencies in measurement standards used from bureau to bureau for employees may not always provide the most meaningful representation of an employee's true performance.

Recommendation 44: The Probation Department should consider forming a working committee to examine the program and personnel management systems and to develop specific recommendations to the Executive Leadership Team for enhancements to the current personnel performance evaluation process.

Promoting Personnel

The promotion process in the Department is administered by the Exam Unit, utilizing the process and procedures established by the County's Department of Human Resources. The Exam Unit is responsible for establishing and running examinations that will bring qualified candidates into the Department as well as the staff promotions for positions of greater responsibility. The Exam Unit prepares and posts job bulletins, accepts applications and processes these applications through the complete examination process. This unit is also responsible for maintaining the legal record of each examination and establishment of the bands to be applicable for each position. The Exam Unit also utilizes the County's automated TRAC system to help in the process of communicating the status of applications and provides information to applicants as to the next step in the process.

Finding 51: Factors outside the established criteria for determining and ranking promotability unduly influence the promotions process and result in promotions being largely perceived as unfairly administered.

The "Appraisal of Promotability" is the key factor determining where individuals rank on Departmental promotional lists. The process used by the Probation Department for completing the appraisal is consistent with County Department of Human Resources policies. The appraisal form establishes specific factors or criteria for evaluating

promotability. For example, the promotability to the position of Probation Director is evaluated using the following factors:

- ✓ Management and Administrative Ability
- ✓ Knowledge and Skills
- ✓ Problem Solving
- ✓ Written and Oral Communication
- ✓ Personal and Public Relations
- ✓ Work Habits and Productivity

The initial appraisal is completed by a manager with direct knowledge of the person's work and abilities. The rater is also required to review the individual's previous performance evaluations.

The initial appraisal is considered a recommendation and is subject to the approval of the Department's Executive Leadership Team. It is appropriate for the Executive Leadership Team to review and require changes in an appraisal. This review and approval provides a check on the process and serves to equalize the ratings among easier to more difficult raters. However, changes in appraisals should be based on factual information and consistent with the established rating factors.

We have been told of cases where appraisal ratings were changed based on innuendo, or for arbitrary and capricious reasons. Examples given include that the person being rated disagreed with them, or looked at them funny. As one Probation Department manager put it: "The Appraisal of Promotability process as practiced by the Department is a disgrace. Bureau Chief's get scores of 100 for their favorites, and the rest of the candidates are placed into blocks according to percentages."

While there is no information available to demonstrate the frequency with which this occurs, the perception is that it is frequent. In our survey of Department employees only 35 percent agreed that promotions are fair and consistent. Only 44 percent of Department managers agreed that promotions are based on skills and abilities.

The perception that Department promotions are not fair is a major contributor to the lower than desired morale of Department employees. Additionally, it creates confusion regarding what the real criteria for promotion are, and what work behaviors need to be modeled within the Department to be successful.

Recommendation 45: The Probation Department should consider restricting changes to Appraisals of Promotability to those that can be justified based on factual information and consistent with established criteria.

Managing Personnel Turnover and Succession

Employee turnover needs to be closely monitored, analyzed and the reasons for turnover occurring should be properly documented. Currently, analysis of employee

turnover is not taking place. Reports from CW-TAPPS are prepared on a monthly basis providing details by bureau regarding employee terminations and the reasons these out-going employees are leaving the Department. In addition, reports detailing the numbers of incoming employees and employee promotions are also provided by this system.

Finding 52: The Probation Department is not adequately tracking, analyzing, or addressing employee turnover

While reports and turnover details and information are available from the CW-TAPPS system, it would appear that the Probation Department is not effectively utilizing these and adequately tracking, analyzing or addressing the root causes and reasons for employee turnover.   As previously noted, the present recruitment and hiring practices do not appear to be providing the sufficient numbers of the qualified candidates to fill open positions within the Department.   With the introduction of various County retirement packages, many long-term service employees are opting for retirement without a suitable replacement being properly identified and trained. Equally, turnover is also being adversely impacted by the applicability of the 4850 legislation in 2001 to all peace officers resulting in over one-quarter of the Department's sworn staff currently on leave due to long-term disability claims. Without the proper analysis and tracking of the reasons for employee turnover, the Department's most urgent hiring vacancies and requirements cannot be addressed in a prompt and efficient manner.

Employee turnover is a critical cost component in any organization. The costs and time for recruiting and filling vacancies, lost available resources from vacant jobs and the costs of training new employee adversely impacts the operations of an organization and ultimately becomes a negative drain on costs.   Unusual turnover of staff in any organization creates a challenge to short and long-term operations and hinders the delivery of quality services. Equally, high personnel turnover rates particularly in the juvenile areas could have an adverse impact on their successful rehabilitation.

Recommendation 46: The Probation Department should consider establishing a process to track, analyze, and address employee turnover to ensure that the reasons for high turnover situations are properly addressed.

Finding 53: The Probation Department does not have an up-to-date succession plan.

Succession planning is an essential tool for properly developing and retaining good employees within an organization to help ensure the continuity of quality services. In addition, the smooth transitioning of key leadership and managerial roles as employees move through the Department ranks or leave for other reasons provides stability to Agency vision, mission and direction.

The Department is currently experiencing high turnover in many of its lead management ranks without an adequate and up-to-date succession plan in place.   Over the past several years, the Department has been impacted by a higher than normal number of

retirements in key management ranks. Equally, a number of upcoming anticipated retirements of long-term managers and various other key supervisory staff are likely to further complicate this situation in the near term. In addition, cutbacks in the available training dollars have further compromised the Department's ability to provide staff with much needed additional training opportunities.

The recent occurrence of employee retirements coupled with other terminations and attrition has left the Agency with 11 out of 16 critical high management vacancies to fill. In addition, to fulfill some basic operational needs, certain lower-level managers were "fast-tracked" and this has resulted in exhausting the lower bands of the higher skilled and more qualified staff.

Recommendation 47: The Probation Department should consider developing an up-to-date succession plan. As part of this effort, consideration should be given toward instituting an administrative intern-program as a means of expediting the professional development process for its designated management-caliber candidates.

Management and Employee Survey Results Related to Personnel Management

Our approach to evaluating the Probation Department's personnel management included administering two surveys - one of Department managers and one of all Department employees. The following exhibits display the results of these surveys related to personnel management and are referred to throughout this section of the report. More detailed results are available in the ***Los Angeles County Probation Department 2005 Management Survey Report*** and the ***Los Angeles County Probation Department 2005 Employee Survey Report,*** which is available for review from the Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller's Office.

Exhibit 9:

Management Survey Responses - Personnel Management
Percentages Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing

Category	Percentage
Recruiting Provides High Quality	15%
Training Effective	29%
Managers Sufficiently Trained/Experienced	43%
Staffed Trained in Admin Processes	19%
Contributions Recognized/Rewarded	52%
Mentoring/Staff Development Commitment	37%
Perf Appraisals Meaningful	48%
Promotions Effectively Administered	48%
Selection/Promotion on Skills/Abilities	44%

Source: 2005 Survey of Probation Department Managers
Note: The above chart shows the percentage of Department managers that responded they either strongly agree or agree with the statement. The remaining percentage responded they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Exhibit 10

Employee Survey Responses - Personnel Management
Percentages Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing

Category	Percentage
Employees High Caliber	76%
Received Training I Need	70%
Encouraged to Develop Skills	69%
Dept Encourages Prof Growth	55%
Understand Job Expectations	94%
Feel Positive About Dept	74%
Dept Good Place to Work	84%
Dept Morale Good	43%
Perf Evalus Completed on Time	83%
Perf Evals Reflect Actual Performance	75%
Employees Held Accountable	40%
Discipline Fair and Consistent	34%
Good Work Properly Recognized	34%
Fair Advancement Opportunities	49%
Promotions Fair/Consistent	35%

Source: 2005 Survey of Probation Department Employees
Note: The above chart shows the percentage of Department employees that responded they either strongly agree or agree with the statement. The remaining percentage responded they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

6. OTHER AUDIT AREAS

In this section of the report we address other audit areas defined in the Scope of Work. These other audit issues include:

- ✓ Department's Safety Program
- ✓ Grant Management
- ✓ Public Information

Department Safety Program

The Probation Department's Safety Office & Safety Program is under the responsibility of the Management Services Bureau.   There is only one designated safety officer for the entire Department, who reports to the person in charge of Risk Management, Safety and Security. This individual is primarily responsible for coordinating and conducting safety inspections of the nearly 50 Department facilities, safety drills, dealing with staff safety concerns, liaison with local fire departments and Cal OSHA.

On at least an annual basis, the safety officer conducts one safety inspection of each of the Department's facilities. Typically, these inspections cover overall cleanliness, sleeping quarters, blocked exits, proper lighting, slip/trip hazards and fire extinguishers. As safety problems are uncovered, they are reported to the director of the facility who has 30 days to respond with corrective action.   Juvenile halls have staff on hand who can correct and/or repair safety issues.

All safety and security related incidents are to be reported by means of a Security Incident Report (SIR), which is filled out by the employee and supervisor. This documentation is requested to be sent to Cal OSHA within three days for their review. Employees are encouraged to follow this process for which certain employee recognition incentives are made available. On occasion, employees will by-pass this process and call Cal OSHA anonymously.

Since 9/11, security has become a higher priority concern in the Department. Recent initiatives have occurred to install metal detectors at five high risk offices. Facilities have been installing and utilizing better security camera at facilities that are programmed to follow movements.   Each site has a building emergency coordinator who handles emergency preparedness techniques for that facility. The Department's emergency plans also function in coordination with the County's emergency drills.

Finding 55: **While the Department has a written safety plan, it includes an injury and illness prevention plan that has not yet been implemented. In addition, there is no formal process established to report unsafe conditions.**

There is a concern that the SIR form is not being filled out on a consistent basis, as standards and criteria for using this form seem to vary from facility to facility.   Also, the

Safety Officer does not always receive this report as required as each facility seems to use the form differently. Also, a standardized form for reporting unsafe conditions needs to be implemented to ensure that all incidents are reported. The current procedures for reporting safety incidents are inefficient and do not encourage prompt follow-up investigations. Due to this inefficiency, the trail for follow-up is not documented.

In addition, safety training efforts needs to improve. The dissemination of important safety information is not adequately coordinated. At the present time, there is no real safety training taking place. The safety officer has proposed instituting a program of having a designated safety coordinator for each site, who would be trained together before being sent out to their individual sites.

Recommendation 59: **The Department should update and implement its injury illness and prevention program. Emphasis should be placed on standardizing procedures for reporting incidents, designating safety coordinators at each location, and establishing proper reporting of unsafe conditions.**

Grants Management

As a provider of rehabilitation programs, the Department seeks outside funding in the form of State and Federal grants to help support key programs that the Department provides and maintains. Examples of these include programs to prevent drug abuse, encourage safe neighborhoods, efforts to promote staying in school for at-risk youth and programs associated with Title V for gang suppression, gang alternative and prevention programs. A separate component of the Department's Contracts Unit, the Grants Management Unit, is responsible for the oversight of grants and contract administration activities with the various agencies and departments that it works with on program activity. The Grants Management Section also consumes an extensive amount of time searching the Internet for potential grant opportunities where the Department might be eligible to apply for grant funding.

When the Grants Management Section finds a suitable opportunity worthy of pursuit, they contact the appropriate bureau to determine if there is an existing or anticipated program that matches the specific grant criteria. Once the necessary background work has been completed and the program specifics have been developed, the Grants Section will develop a recommendation for how to proceed and present it to the Executive Leadership Team. In many cases, the Department will look to collaborate with other departments or agencies as a means of increasing the grant funding potential. In particular, the Department has collaborated with the Mental Health Department, Sheriff's Department and Department of Health Services.

On a monthly basis, a meeting is held to discuss the Department's more significant grant funded programs and activities. Along with the responsible program directors and

fiscal services representatives, the Grants Section manager participates in these meetings. Among the topics discussed are funding issues, expenditure activity and planned measurement outcomes. Also, once a particular grant reaches the 75% mark on spending, discussions need to occur as to the options to be pursued for additional or alternative funding, if necessary. The Grants section has very minimal involvement with the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) programs because historically the Juvenile Bureau has handled grants related to JJCPA programs.

Finding 56: There are no specific written policies or procedures that stipulate how the Grants Process function works within the Department.

The Grants Section has acquired a number of "how-to" manuals over the years for their use in developing strategies and methods for acquiring grant funds. The grants management process described above is not formally documented. Also, as a general rule, Probation staff are not provided with specific training or education as to the roles and responsibilities of the Grants Section. Instances have occurred where the Grants Section discovers that another bureau has either negotiated or attempted to negotiate a grant opportunity on an "after-the-fact" basis. As a result of these independent actions on the part of other staff, the Department's prospects for certain grant funding could potentially be in jeopardy. Also, the current Grants supervisor is the third individual in that position in less than four years.

In their efforts to obtain funding for various program activities, the Department has encountered a situation where money available has become extremely tight and hard to obtain. In particular, most of the potential for State funding has been reduced significantly. Also, the Grants Manager noted that most of the Federal money the Department obtained in the past seems to be going toward Homeland Security related projects.

Recommendation 60: The Probation Department should develop specific written policies and procedures as to how the grants process functions and operates within the Department.

Public Information

The Probation Department, like most public safety organizations, is often in the public eye and the subject of media attention. Much of this attention is not positive. Ensuring that the information provided to the public is accurate and fairly represents the Department is a very important function.

Finding 57: The Probation Department's public information and media relations function lacks the authority to effectively represent the Department.

The Probation Department's public information function is currently a one-person operations within the Department's Juvenile Special Services Bureau. The function is responsible for developing news releases, interacting with the media, holding press

briefings, and responding to media requests. In addition, the function organizes special and community events, attends community meetings, and develops brochures and information bulletins.

A key role of a public information function is to ensure that the Department is providing a consistent and accurate message and image. This is a Department-wide function and should be placed at a level within the Department with the authority to be effective. The function is currently working with all of the Bureau's of the Department, but often in an informal and advisory capacity. Additionally, the level of effort necessary to provide an effective public information operation for an organization the size and the level of public exposure of the Probation Department, likely exceeds the current staffing level.

Recommendation 61: The Probation Department should consider moving the Public Information function to the Office of the Chief Probation Officer, giving it the authority to oversee and coordinate all Department public information efforts, and providing it the resources necessary to be effective.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT
PROGRAM AUDIT REPORT

SUBMITTED TO

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

By

Child Welfare League of America

September 2005

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) conducted a program audit of the Los Angeles County Probation Department over a six-month period of time beginning in February and ending in August of 2005. The audit was carried out pursuant to an order from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and under the supervision of the Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller's Office.

The County Board requested the program audit to review the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's programs, and to assess particular issues, such as to what extent adult and juvenile programs are family-centered and community-based, employ evidence-based practices, achieve client outcomes, and coordinate with other systems and agencies serving the same populations.

METHODOLOGY

CWLA assembled an audit team consisting of personnel from inside and outside of its organization; persons who have expertise in the various topics to be examined during the program audit. The program audit consisted of four elements: 1) Assessment of Program Planning and Implementation; 2) Benchmarking and Best Practice Analysis; 3) Development of Client Outcome Measures; and 4) Assessment of Internal and Inter-agency Work Processes. The following methods were used to carry out the elements of the audit:

- Document review
- Key stakeholder interviews
- Focus groups
- Group interviews
- Process mapping
- Case review
- Employee survey
- Benchmarking and Best Practices Meeting with Probation Management
- Data review
- Camp program review

FINDINGS

The sheer size of the Probation Department and it operations present enormous challenges to delivering a performance that meets the expectations of the various stakeholders in Los Angeles County. There is much that can be done, however, to meet these challenges and the expectations of the Los Angeles community with the efforts of many individuals in both leadership and line positions in the Department who are committed to providing quality probation services. Following is a summary of the findings regarding the Department's planning processes, service delivery, best practices, performance measurement, and relationships with other organizations.

I.   Program Planning and Implementation

The Department has laudable mission and vision statements that focus on a combination of goals, "promote and enhance public safety, ensure victims' rights, and facilitate the positive behavior change of adult and juvenile probationers." The challenges of caseload size, resources, and the Department's lack of focus on rehabilitation in its performance measurement have limited incorporating the mission into daily operations.

Program Planning

Another strong limiting factor for the Department is the absence of a comprehensive plan for its operations. There are many references in the strategic planning documents to developing plans to improve various aspects of probation functions, but the strategies' primary focus is on day-to-day work processes. The strategies do not focus on the best programs or practices to meet the goals set out in the mission and vision statements.

A challenge facing the Department is that it does not have much performance data on the achievement of intermediate and final client outcomes. It measures mostly work processes. As a result, the Department cannot continuously evaluate what works in its programs and services to incorporate these data into its planning processes.

Implementation - Resources and Service Delivery

In terms of human resources, some caseloads are high in both the adult and juvenile arenas. The Department is not able to demonstrate that it meets its requirements for monthly face-to-face contacts which may be a function of caseload size. The determination of ideal workload measures would require a careful analysis of caseload size and it would allow the Department to clearly articulate its capacity to supervise probationers.

There is no objective resource inventory and analysis of resources available for adult and juvenile probationers making it difficult to gather data on service needs, availability and delivery. Thus, the findings regarding resources and service delivery are based largely on interviews and meetings with people inside and out of the Department who work in this system. There is consensus regarding the lack of program resources in the juvenile arena, particularly pronounced in the areas of mental health, substance abuse, and home-based services. For adults, it is also reported that there are few resources available to focus on risk reduction and behavior change.

There is also a strong consensus among stakeholders inside and outside of the Department that there is a need for more community resources and limited awareness of the resources that do exist within the community for probationers. A critical finding is that most of the Department's employees in both adult and juvenile probation who responded to the employee survey believe that the Department should coordinate with community-based organizations in defined geographic areas to target the needs of juveniles in that area. To organize field probation services in this manner would engage a larger community in the planning and development of resources, create a better

2

knowledge of available resources, and provide a more manageable foundation for setting and measuring client outcomes.

II.   Best Practices

Best Practices Generally

The Probation Department either operates or contracts with a wide variety of programs intended to reduce the future criminal behaviors of those in its charge. Few of these programs, however, have undergone rigorous evaluation to determine their effectiveness and thereby reinforce the use of best practices or evidence-based practices in the Department's operations.

The Department has moved some probationers into programs that are evidence-based and it has initiated training programs to support awareness of best practices and skill development of staff in the areas of assessment, adolescent development, cognitive-behavioral therapy and multi-systemic therapy.   The Department does not have, however, a comprehensive plan for how it will incorporate evidence-based practices throughout its probation services.

The Department's recent implementation of a validated assessment instrument, the Los Angeles Risk and Resiliency Checklist (LARRC) for juvenile probationers is a best practice that is particularly promising and can serve as the foundation for improving service delivery and client outcomes.

The Camps

CWLA was asked to carry out a limited on-site review of the camps to determine whether there was evidence to support stakeholders' anecdotal reports of concerns regarding the treatment and handling of camp residents by the staff, disciplinary procedures, programming, case management, and the availability of treatment resources. CWLA found evidence to support the concerns of stakeholders that warrants a much more comprehensive review of the probation camps.

CWLA found that 1) the stated mission and goals of the camp program do not match the programming and treatment practice at the camps; 2) current staffing levels are inadequate to achieve the stated goals, a condition which is compounded by the methods used to schedule staff; 3) deficiencies in the training of staff exist that do not support the camps' program goals and can affect the safety of the camps; 4) the education program in the camps is not integrated well with the overall camp experience and goals; and 5) there are no evaluation data regarding the effectiveness of the camp program in terms of its utility for particular offenders, length of confinement, or cost. Further, it appears that Los Angeles County has a greater reliance on out-of-home placements of youth (including camp placements) than other California counties.

3

The camp program, however, is providing a response to the need for an intermediate sanction alternative to probation in the community or incarceration in the California Youth Authority (CYA). A promising practice is the Department's recently implemented out-of-home screening unit to enhance consistency in the screening process for camp and other placements and to reduce the level of inappropriate placements.

III. Performance Measurement and Client Outcomes

The achievement of successful client outcomes is the business of the Probation Department. It is part of what is reflected in its mission and vision statements and it also what the public expects from the Probation Department. The achievement of successful outcomes depends on, first, a careful identification of what outcomes are sought, second, an examination and address of the factors that affect achievement, and third, the development of a measurement system to document achievement.

The Department routinely measures work processes and activities with little focus on client outcomes. This is important because often what gets measured is what people value and where they focus their efforts. The Department has some evidence of a focus on client outcomes in its practice, but a limited review of juvenile cases suggests that the achievement of client outcomes does not drive the case activity.

The Department could change its culture and improve outcomes for probationers by giving a strong focus to the measurement of client outcomes. And, by publicizing what it values vis-à-vis client outcomes, the performance of probation officers would become more focused on the achievement of those outcomes in addition to the successful performance of work processes.

This lack of focus on client outcomes is evident also in the Department's contracting with community-based organizations (CBOs). Some CBOs state that the expectations regarding outcomes are not clear. At the same time, they identify a need for a collaborative approach with the Probation Department to identify appropriate client outcomes. If the department were to focus its measurement on the achievement of successful client outcomes, it would be able to move from just purchasing services to also purchasing outcomes from its providers.

IV. Intra- and Interagency Work Processes

Intra-agency

The Department recently adopted the Los Angeles Risk and Resiliency Checklist (LARRC), considered to be a well designed tool for assessment, case planning and decision-making. The Department's intent is to make the LARRC a dynamic instrument that can be used throughout the case to identify the needs of children, determine levels of supervision, aid with the placement decision, and drive the case plan that will indicate what needs the child has in the community. This is critical because the review of cases illustrated that there has not been an effective connection between the various assessment and case planning documents in the past.

Most juvenile employees who responded to the employee survey believe that probationers in specialized caseloads (e.g. school-based supervision) receive an enhanced level of supervision, regular supervision does not allow for an adequate level of supervision, and probationers need more help than they presently receive during their period of supervision. Most of the respondents also believe that the assignment of all probation officers to smaller geographic areas would result in more effective supervision of probationers.

The Department struggles to meet the requirements for contact between the probation officer and the probationers and their families. Further, there is a lack of continuity in probation officers supervising probationers which can affect the probationer's achievement of positive outcomes. This lack of continuity occurs with the transfer of probationers from one status to another (e.g. investigation to supervision, community to placement, placement to community), related timeliness of assignment of probation officers, and multiple transfers during the period of supervision.

Inter-agency

Community-based Organizations (CBOs)
Stakeholders report that the Department's relationships with community-based organizations are improving, but the small number of CBOs who attended the focus group with CWLA identified significant opportunities for improvement. Some community-based organizations report concerns about the working relationship on both a case and an institutional level and suggest that they would like to be stronger partners with the Department in the planning and delivery of services. They express concerns about how well the Department matches juveniles with services. Most of the juvenile employees who responded to the survey believe that the relationships with community-based agencies have improved over the past three years, but that the Probation Department would function more effectively if its relationships with community-based agencies were better.

Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)
The Department of Children and Family Services employees report that there are many opportunities for improvement in the relationship with the Probation Department, but there are some good working relationships with individuals from probation working together with them on the same tasks. The need for improvement relates particularly to the participation of the probation staff, training, and information sharing in the operations of three program areas (i.e., START, WRAPAROUND, and the 241.1 process) and moving youth between agencies.

Department of Mental Health (DMH)
The Department of Mental Health employees report that there are issues to be addressed in the working relationships with and the practices of the Probation Department regarding screening and treatment of youth in the juvenile halls and delivery of services to juveniles residing in the camps. The areas of concern are continuity of services, appropriate supervision, matching kids to services, and information sharing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CWLA made 50 recommendations to the Probation Department based on the findings in this program audit. They are described throughout the various sections of the audit report and also can be read altogether in Appendix A.

The recommendations' themes are captured in recommendation #1 which states that the Department should develop a multi-year, comprehensive action plan, including the principles for implementing evidence-based practices, a strong statement of desired client outcomes, and a system of performance measurement that reinforces the use of evidence-based practices and the achievement of desired client outcomes. Stronger emphasis on performance measurement, client outcomes, and program evaluation is a theme that runs through many of the recommendations. Other themes in the recommendations include addressing workload issues, resource deficiencies, probation officer contact with probationers, and greater attention to making all of the Department's efforts evidence-based. Many recommendations direct attention to the need for a stronger partnership with community-based organizations along with concentrating efforts geographically to improve how the Department delivers probation services. Finally, some recommendations call for additional study or review of critical issues that surfaced in the program audit, but could not be completely addressed within the audit's limited scope.

INTRODUCTION

The Los Angeles County Probation Department (LACPD) is the primary agency responsible for recommending and enforcing court-ordered sanctions for probationers, including the detention of juvenile offenders and the arrest of adult offenders; providing supervision and monitoring of probationers; and preventing and reducing criminal activity. It has expanded to become the largest probation department in the world, providing supervision to approximately 60,000 adult and 20,000 juvenile probationers.

The County Board of Supervisors requested the program audit to review the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's programs, as well as those of its contractors, and to assess particular issues, such as to what extent adult and juvenile programs are family-centered and community-based, employ evidence-based practices, and (for juvenile programs) apply positive youth development principles. Of particular concern were questions that had been raised regarding client outcomes achieved by the Department and its contractors. The program audit was also requested to evaluate the level of coordination and resource sharing between the Department and other systems and agencies serving the same populations.

The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) conducted a program audit of the Department over a six-month period of time beginning in February and ending in August of 2005. The audit was carried out pursuant to an order from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and under the supervision of the Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller's Office. The Auditor-Controller and CWLA jointly agreed that the program audit would have an emphasis on juvenile probation but that some of the audit activities would also focus on adult probation.

CWLA assembled an audit team consisting of personnel from inside and outside of its organization; persons who have expertise in the various topics to be examined during the program audit. Many of the audit activities were conducted on site in Los Angeles. The Probation Department provided both a liaison staff person and office space to assist the CWLA audit team to carry out its work.

This report presents the findings and recommendations of the CWLA program audit. Its appendices include supporting materials, such as instruments used to collect audit data, and summaries of data collected.

PROGRAM AUDIT METHODOLOGY

The program audit consisted of four elements: 1) Assessment of Program Planning and Implementation; 2) Benchmarking and Best Practice Analysis; 3) Development of Client Outcome Measures; and 4) Assessment of Internal and Inter-agency Work Processes. The following multiple methods were used to carry out the elements of the audit.

Document Review – CWLA conducted paper reviews of the Probation Department's strategic planning documents, policy and procedure manuals, and interagency agreements. It used a set of questions to analyze these documents to determine their utility to the Department's program planning and implementation (Appendix B – Questions for Document Review).

Key Stakeholder Interviews - The CWLA audit team interviewed 26 LA County public agency and Board leaders inside and outside of the Department to determine their views regarding the operation of the Probation Department (Appendix C – List of Key Stakeholders). A questionnaire was used to conduct the interviews (Appendix D – Key Stakeholder Interview Questions). Responses to the questionnaire were compiled from the individual interviews into one document organized by the interview questions. The findings from the interviews were summarized to help direct the subsequent audit activities.

Focus Groups – CWLA conducted focus groups to help answer questions in the various elements of the audit. Sets of questions were developed to direct the focus group activity (Appendix E – Juvenile Focus Group Questions). This activity included several groups of children; in field supervision, in camp, and in placement. For the field supervision and placement groups, the juveniles were randomly selected for participation from lists of those two populations in selected geographic areas. Meetings were held in area offices. The camp juveniles were drawn from the daily population at one camp. CWLA had a difficult time getting the voluntary participation of youth from field supervision in the focus groups. Most of these juveniles, once identified, were asked to the meetings by the probation staff, as were the placement and camp youth. Thirteen (13) children from field supervision, 11 children in placement, and 11 children from the camps are represented in the reported comments from focus groups in this report. CWLA also met with several other groups of children during its camp review.

CWLA also conducted focus groups with group home providers and community- based organizations (Appendix F – CBO and Group Home Provider Questions). The Probation Department provided CWLA with lists of the community-based organizations and group home providers with whom it contracts. CWLA then selected for invitation organizations to represent various geographic areas as well as various types of programming. CWLA invited over 20 community-based organizations and over 20 group home providers to meet with them in two separately scheduled focus group meetings. Neither meeting was well attended so that the findings in the report represent the input of only 10 organizations. The participants, however, were from some established organizations and

they provided some very strong opinions. These opinions may or may not be representative of the two groups as a whole.

Group Interviews – CWLA conducted group interviews with judicial officers and the clinical staff from the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH). For the meeting with the judicial officers, the questions from key stakeholders were used as a guide for the discussion. Michael Nash, Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court extended an invitation to delinquency judicial officers to attend a meeting with members of the CWLA audit team to discuss the Probation Department's operations and its working relationship with the court. Fourteen judicial officers attended the meeting.

For DMH, CWLA asked the management to identify seasoned employees who interact directly with the Probation Department. Fourteen employees attended the meeting which was held at the Central Juvenile Hall. CWLA originally planned to do process mapping to explore DMH's working relationship with the Probation Department. However, as the meeting opened, it was apparent that this method would not generate the most useful information so a group interview/discussion was initiated. The discussion focused on three areas: screening at juvenile halls, treatment services at juvenile halls, and services at the camps.

Process Mapping – CWLA conducted process mapping exercises with two groups; deputy probation officers and representatives of the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). The exercise with the probation officers was designed to review both internal and interagency work processes. CWLA asked to meet with a seasoned group of probation officers, knowledgeable in their functions. Fourteen deputy probation officers attended the meeting. Several functional areas were represented in the group including regular investigation, 241.1 investigation, and several types of supervision: regular, gang, school-based, housing-based, drug court, CCTP, and contract. The group was divided into three smaller groups to develop cross-functional maps identifying the people involved and illustrating the tasks and decisions that would need to be made in the various types of functional areas of investigation and supervision.

The process mapping exercise with DCFS personnel was designed to examine the working relationship between DCFS and the Probation Department. CWLA asked to meet with a seasoned group of personnel who interface with the Probation Department in the course of their job duties. There were three groups of staff from distinct functional program areas in the Department; START, an early intervention collaboration between LA Unified School District, DCFS, and the Probation Department to address juveniles at risk of further penetration into the juvenile system, the 241.1 unit that addresses children who are subject to the dual jurisdiction of the dependency and delinquency courts, and WRAPAROUND, a service collaboration involving DCFS, Mental Health, and the Probation Department.

Case Review – Case record reviews were completed on a random, countywide sample of 74 youths who had been adjudicated delinquent based on petitions filed between March 15 and April 15 of 2004 that resulted in an initial disposition court order of home on

probation (HOP). CWLA designed the case review instrument and the project manager trained the CWLA consultant team on completion of the case review instrument and tested inter-rater reliability.

The limitation of this methodology is that this case record review is not statistically significant, due to the small number of youth probationer cases (N=74). Thus, the findings may be only broadly indicative of practice within the department. However, they serve as a guide in shaping questions, raising issues and providing a framework for discussion, and can add some anecdotal evidence to project data collected using other methods (i.e. interviews, focus groups, process mapping, document and data review, etc.). Lack of consistent documentation in many of the case records included in the sample may limit the validity and/or reliability of the information gathered. Because of this lack of documentation, case reviewers may have made more subjective decisions in determining their responses to some of the case record review questions.

Employee Survey – CWLA conducted a survey of field probation officers, supervisors, and their managers, in both the adult and juvenile arenas, to gain their perspectives on the Department's program planning and implementation, delivery of services, and relationships with other agencies. The survey instrument was developed and administered in the last stages of the program audit. It was based, in large part, on findings and recommendations from other audit activities so that one of its uses is to determine how the employees see some of the issues and problems identified by others. The survey, however, also provided an opportunity for employees to express their opinions directly with several open-ended questions. The response potential was 1476 employees who were provided with on-line access to the survey. Two Hundred Ninety Eight (298) employees responded to the survey or approximately 20% of the potential respondents.

Benchmarking and Best Practices Meeting with Probation Management – CWLA conducted a benchmarking and best practices exercise in a full day meeting involving most of the Department's Executive Leadership Team (Chief and Bureau Chiefs), Special Assistants, and two Hall superintendents, totaling 14 people. The first task assigned to this group was to identify 5 programs in each of the following three categories: those requiring the greatest total resources; those costing the most per case; and those that were thought to be the most effective. The 14 participants were divided into 3 groups with each group instructed to select 4 programs; one program from each of the 3 lists, and one more from any one of the lists. They were then instructed to make a list of the most critical elements or components for each of the programs on their list. Next they were provided with a summary of the research on "what works" for delinquency prevention and intervention, documenting the best practices to address juvenile delinquency. Then the participants were asked to score each of the program elements depending on how well it was supported by the evidence of "what works."

A second exercise for the group involved performance measurement and client outcomes. The group was asked to develop a list of desired client outcomes for probationers. They developed a list that focused primarily on youth but included some outcomes for adults as well. Then they were asked to develop a list of factors that affected the achievement of

those outcomes. Two lists of factors were developed; one that related to the entire list of client outcomes; and one that related to a specific client outcome: do well at school. After the lists were generated, the CWLA consultants shared observations about what implications the lists had for benchmarking and publication of the Department's outcome-based performance.

Data Review – CWLA made several data requests during the audit period. Attached are the initial data request (Appendix G – Initial Request for Information), and a data request for Standards Information (Appendix H – Request for Standards Information). Additionally, requests were made for follow-up information as the program audit proceeded. CWLA reviewed reports and documents as they related to the various elements of the program audit.

Camp Review – At the request of the Auditor-Controller, CWLA conducted a limited review of the camps to determine whether there was any validity to the anecdotal remarks made about the camps in the course of conducting the other audit activities. The review consisted of an on-site visit to observe the operations and review the programming of eight of the nineteen residential camps that comprise the Camp Program for juvenile offenders for the County of Los Angeles. It also included a review of documents describing the operations of the camps and some reports of the camps' actual operations. During the two-day review of the eight camps, the CWLA Review Team toured the physical plants and observed the living quarters, educational operations and facilities, dining and recreational areas, shower and hygiene facilities, and the administrative areas and operations. It should be noted that the review was not designed or contemplated as a rigorous examination or comprehensive audit of the RTSB Camp Program. The CWLA Review Team was tasked to observe operations and programming, conduct unscheduled interviews of administrative and managerial staff and camp wards, assess treatment and service provisions, and formulate generalized findings and observations.

AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The report findings and recommendations are organized into four sections as follows:

I. Program Planning and Implementation

II. Best Practices and Benchmarking

III. Performance Measurement and Client Outcomes

IV. Intra and Inter-Agency Work Processes

The emphasis of this program audit was on the juvenile arena. Findings and recommendations for both the adult and juvenile arenas are described although not all audit activities involved the adult arena.

I.   PROGRAM PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

To be effective, an organization must have a clear mission, strategies that are incorporated into its daily operations, clear policies, procedures and protocols that flow from the organization's strategies, and a workforce that understands and is committed to the foregoing.   In its assessment of the Probation Department's program planning and implementation, CWLA asked questions about the strategies, policies, and procedures to determine whether they reflected best practices, were evidence-based, and reflected the stated mission, objectives, and values of the organization. It also polled stakeholders including other county agencies, contract providers, and juveniles to determine what they thought about the Department's programs and their implementation. This assessment was accomplished through document review, interviews, focus groups, process mapping, and an employee survey.

A.   Mission and Vision

FINDING: The Department has laudable mission and vision statements. However, it is challenged in implementing the mission and vision in its daily operations.
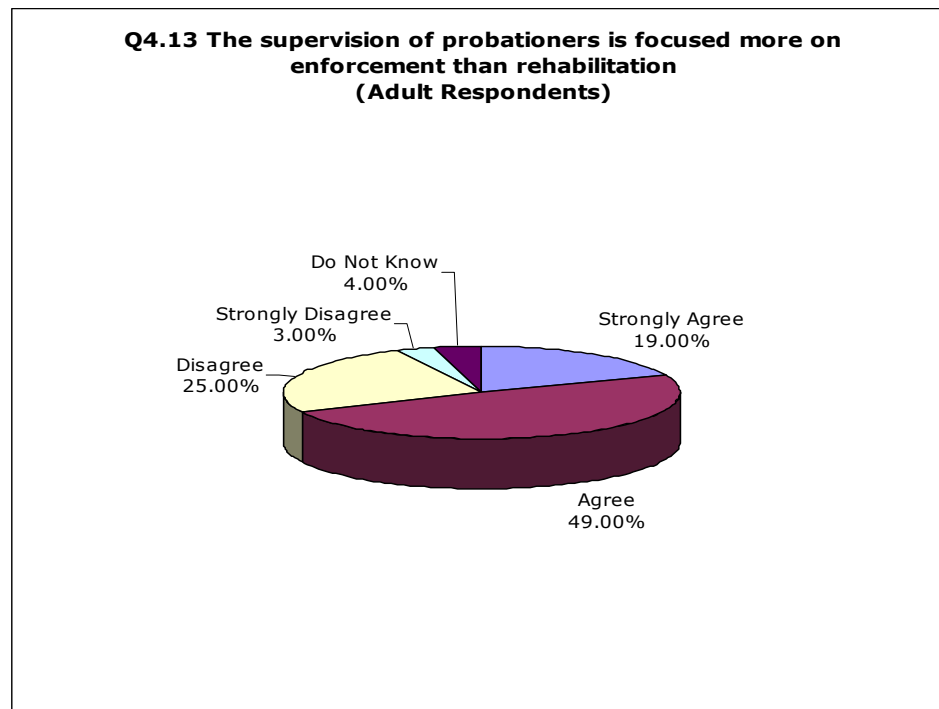
The Department's mission is to "promote and enhance public safety, ensure victims' rights, and facilitate the positive behavior change of adult and juvenile probationers." Its vision is to:

- "recommend and enforce court-ordered sanctions for probationers, including the detention of juvenile offenders and the arrest of adult offenders.
- provide supervision and monitoring of probationers; prevent and reduce criminal activity by developing and implementing strategies from early intervention to suppression.
- proactively seek out and maximize all opportunities to positively impact the behavior of probationers by providing them with educational and vocational services that will build upon the strengths and capabilities of probationers, their families, and communities."

There is a reality to be addressed in terms of all the language in the mission and vision that addresses the rehabilitation of offenders. While the statements are laudable, given the size of caseloads, the availability of treatment resources, and the Department's lack of focus on rehabilitation in its performance measurement, it is difficult to deliver on the promises to positively impact the behavior of probationers.

Some key stakeholders interviewed stated that the Department's mission is clear and that funding is the problem. Others stated that the Department's mission is not clear nor are its priorities.

The Department's mission and vision statements reflect its dual responsibilities of law enforcement and rehabilitation. As to the Department's mission, there is a recurring theme heard from the Department's employees and its stakeholders about the struggle between enforcement as the primary mission versus rehabilitation, in the juvenile area particularly. As shown in the charts below, the employees' perspective on this topic differs depending on whether they work in adult or juvenile.

Q4.13 The supervision of probationers is focused more on enforcement than rehabilitation (Adult Respondents)

Do Not Know 4.00%
Strongly Disagree 3.00%
Disagree 25.00%
Strongly Agree 19.00%
Agree 49.00%

Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the adult probation employees who responded to the employee survey agree or strongly agree with the statement that "the supervision of probationers is focused more on enforcement than rehabilitation", 28% disagree or strongly disagree, and 4% state that they do not know. Only 43% of the juvenile respondents agree or strongly agree with this statement, 54% disagree or strongly disagree with this statement, and 3% respond that they do not know.

**Q4.13 The supervision of probationers is focused more on
enforcement than rehabilitation
(Juvenile Respondents)**

Do Not Know
3.39%

Strongly Agree
7.63%

Strongly Disagree
9.32%

Agree
35.59%

Disagree
44.07%
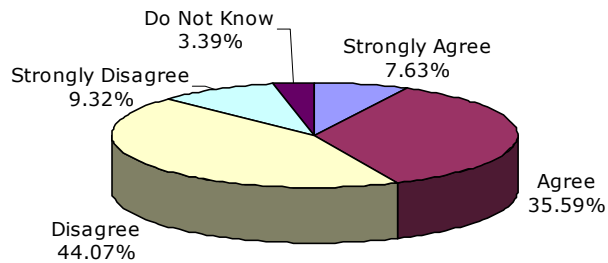
B. Strategies

The Department's strategic plan is contained in a document titled "County of Los Angeles Probation Department STRATEGIC MAP." This document outlines the Department's strategies in 8 goal areas: service excellence, workforce excellence, organizational effectiveness, fiscal responsibility, children and families' well-being, community services, health and mental health, and public safety.

FINDING: The strategies adopted by the Department address some components of evidence-based practices; however, the strategies' primary focus is day-to-day work processes, as is the Department's performance measurement, leaving the Department without a good foundation for quality assurance and program evaluation efforts.

FINDING: Strategies aimed at improving services to youth are not well specified and do not include monitoring the quality or quantity of the contact between the probation officer and the client towards the goal of reducing recidivism. The Department has begun to initiate changes in this area.

The Department's strategies address some components of evidence-based practices such as assessing risk and need, utilizing a strengths-based approach, engaging the community for on-going support and short-term recidivism data. Missing, however, is an overall commitment to strategies that have been proven to be effective with adult and juvenile probationers.

Day-to-day processes such as court reports, management of paperwork and staffing issues are the primary focus of the strategies as opposed to developing resources and effort to creating an evidence-based culture. For instance, at the present time the scorecards to measure performance are only capturing whether clients recidivate while on probation. In order to measure the effect of the services they have in place, it is necessary to also have longitudinal studies of recidivism and other client outcomes, and to measure intermediate outcomes at case closure (e.g. payment of restitution, completion of community service, meeting conditions of probation, attending school, etc.).

Most of the strategies aimed at improving services to youth are non-specific. There are many references to developing plans to improve various aspects of probation functions, but strategies do not include monitoring the quality or quantity of the contact between the probation officer and the client towards the goal of reducing recidivism. There are efforts underway that encourage service integration but the efforts relate more to committee involvement than to setting goals for interagency involvement based on case plans for individual clients.

The Department's SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) Analysis, completed in 2003, was a part of its preparation for the development of its strategic plan. It includes "Effective interventions that focus on education, literacy and employment." as a strength. However, major criminogenic factors such as dysfunctional family, low self-control, substance abuse, anti-social values and attitudes, anti-social personality and criminal peers are not addressed.

Best practices standards focus on risk, criminogenic (producing or tending to produce crime or criminality) needs, and responsivity to both risk and needs. The following set of strategies based on the eight principles from Implementing Evidence-based Practice in Community Corrections (U.S. Department of Justice and Crime and Justice Institute, 2004) could be established corresponding with what constitutes service excellence, (goal one) in the Department's strategic plan, "provide the public with easy access to quality information and services that are both beneficial and responsive."

1. Assess for risk and criminogenic needs (reassessment as well).
2. Enhance client motivation (adopt assessment to measure motivation).
3. Target interventions based on risk and need (highest risk clients getting highest intensity of service in criminogenic need areas).
4. Use proven treatment models based on research and evidence to reduce recidivism.
5. Support treatment models with qualified and involved leadership and implement with a well-trained staff.
6. Engage and utilize community supports.
7. Employ quality assurance protocols for integrity and adherence.
8. Institutionalize on-going evaluation and research (i.e. short and intermediate strategies such as pre/post testing, satisfaction surveys, risk/need reassessment, improvement on criminogenic risk factors, long-term strategies such as longitudinal studies).

RECOMMENDATION #1: Develop a multi-year, comprehensive action plan, including the principles for implementing evidence-based practices, a strong statement of desired client outcomes, and a system of performance measurement that reinforces the use of evidence-based practices and the achievement of desired client outcomes. Publicize the plan or roadmap, engage the stakeholders, line staff and community in the planning process, its implementation, and progress so that others join forces with the Department and become invested in its success. The planning process should be a big effort carried out over several weeks or months with clear benchmarks and institutionalized review mechanisms.

RECOMMENDATION #2: Solicit feedback from all stakeholders regularly, including probationers and their families, contracted providers and community resources to guide future planning, to assess service excellence, and to evaluate program efforts.

RECOMMENDATION #3: Provide for the evaluation of existing programs and new initiatives (e.g. the Los Angeles Risk and Resiliency Checklist [LARRC] and the new screening unit to handle out-of-home placements) to determine whether practices result in the desired outcomes and ensure that the programs and initiatives are implemented as intended.

C.   Policies and Procedures

a. Juvenile Policy Manual

FINDING: The juvenile policy manual is very outdated (1991). The Department issues detailed, specific, easy to read directives to provide up-to-date guidance to staff.

The policies reflect the strategies generally. The juvenile manual is very specific as to policy and procedures but very outdated. It was written in 1991. It is difficult to know how much is still valid, as the updating procedures (directives) are not linked to the manual for replacement purposes, making it difficult to evaluate its program utility as CWLA did with the adult policy manual.

The Department has recently revamped many of its practices in the juvenile arena, and has developed extensive directives for the conduct of work in these areas.

The directives are detailed, easy to read, and likely useful to carry out the subject activities. The problem, however, is that they are produced as the need arises, posted for a period of time, and not keyed to an existing manual so that they can be readily placed in a section of related material. The only instruction at the bottom of the directive is "Manual Holders: Cross-reference your manuals to this directive where appropriate."

RECOMMENDATION #4: Update the Juvenile Manual from the 1991 edition. When a rewrite occurs, it should include a method for inserting replacement policies (presently

described in the Department's directives) into the manual so that it would continually be updated; make the manual available on-line

b. Adult Policy Manual

FINDING: The adult policy manual is well-organized and focuses on supervision, proper reporting, public safety, and victims.

FINDING: The adult manual does not specify the risk assessment instrument to be utilized by staff and does not include policies specific to risk reduction and behavior change in probationers.

The policies were well-organized once the reader gets to the text. The Table of Contents is hard to follow. It would be helpful if the Table of Contents was set up with headings and definitive sections and repaginated.

The policies reflect the strategies in some areas and not in others. A prevailing theme in the strategies is performance as to court reports and this is reflected also in the policies. Addressing client needs is primarily limited to the court ordered conditions and monitoring their completion. The strategies speak of utilizing a strength-based approach but there is no documentation of this in the policies.

The utilization of a risk assessment tool, along with mid-term reassessment appears to be an established protocol. Clients are categorized based on their risk score, with 14 or lower receiving minimal supervision, while those scoring 15 or higher receive more intense supervision. Specialized units for higher risk offenders are in place, such as Child Threat and a Specialized Gang Unit. Risk assessments are covered in the policies along with classification procedures for low and high risk clients. The policies state that this is a standardized form with instructions on the back of the form. The policies do not identify the actual instrument.

Clients are referred for services based on their court-ordered conditions. No evidence of assessing criminogenic needs or referring clients for services based on those needs was evident. The policies for interactions with offenders do not include anything on motivational interviewing strategies or the use of a strengths-based approach. The policies do make use of some responsivity factors such as assignment of cases to specialized units when available and use of interpreters for language barriers. Missing are factors such as motivation, gender-specific considerations, mental health, family, etc.

Case Management is described in the policies as interviewing, collecting information, reviewing compliance with court orders, investigating violations and re-instructing clients when modifications are made to the conditions. While these are all components that are necessary, on-going supervision/case management needs to include relapse prevention strategies/plans in the highest criminogenic need areas, positive reinforcement utilizing the 4:1 principle, reassessment data, etc. Protective factors are not assessed or used as part of case management.

The policies provide for the assessment of risk and allocation of resources to those posing the greatest risk to re-offend, an important part of evidence-base practice. The policies reflect a strong focus on supervision, proper reporting, public safety and victims. The lack of focus is in the area of risk reduction and targeting the issues that have been proven to reduce recidivism.

In terms of the Department's mission, objectives, and values, the policies reflect the pieces on public safety, victim's rights and enforcing court ordered conditions. They are weak in the areas of promoting positive behavior change and utilizing strategies from early intervention to suppression. The legal mandates are not only reflected in the policies but they are cited throughout. The policies are a useful tool for completing probation tasks. They are not as helpful in directing staff how to interact with clients for optimal outcomes.

In the context of the existing system, the policies provide adequate decision-making criteria. For example, the process for completing a Pre-sentence Investigation Report is comprehensive and covers every step and page of the report. The same is true with Probation Supervision. Everything is covered from intake through discharge, even detailing the types of probationer contacts.

RECOMMENDATION #5: Adopt and implement the use of a standardized risk/needs assessment (the Level of Services Inventory-revised [LSI-r] is currently under Departmental consideration) that not only identifies risk level, but also criminogenic needs and protective factors and norm it to the LA County probation population. Adopt and implement the use of a responsivity tool (identifies what strategies are the most effective to address barriers to achieving success for particular types of clients).

RECOMMENDATION #6: Develop and implement policy that addresses referral of clients for services based on criminogenic needs as well as court ordered conditions, as well as an assessment to measure motivation in the criminogenic need areas.

RECOMMENDATION #7: Develop relevant policy and implement case management strategies based on offender risk reduction (i.e. encompassing risk, need, responsivity, protective factors, motivational interviewing, strength-based approach, skill train with directed practice, positive reinforcement, relapse prevention, community supports).

RECOMMENDATION #8: Put training and QA systems in place to ensure that court reports focus on issues such as providing services based on risk, criminogenic needs and responsivity.

D. Implementation: Resources and Service Delivery

Resources to meet the needs of adult and juvenile probationers include the Department's own human resources, other County provided services (i.e. mental health, substance abuse) and community-based services.

a. The Department's Human Resources

FINDING: Some Department caseloads are high in both the adult and the juvenile arenas which impacts its capacity to deliver probation services.

The Department's average caseload in adult probation is 185 probationers for each probation officer. This average accounts for the specialized caseloads which are quite a bit lower depending on the case type and the banked caseloads which are 750 probationers for each probation officer. In juvenile, the June 2005 Monthly Supervision Report Summary shows that the average community-based supervision caseload is 74 probationers for each probation officer and the average specialized supervision caseload is 39 probationers for each probation officer.

An analysis of caseload size and a determination of ideal workload measures would assist the Department to articulate clearly its capacity to supervise probationers. As later findings in this report indicate, the Department is not able to demonstrate that it meets its requirements for monthly face-to-face contact with juvenile probationers and their parents. This may be a function of caseload size.

In the spring 2005 issue of Perspectives, a publication of the American Probation and Parole Association (APPA), an article on caseload size (Paparozzi and Hinzman, 2005) states that there is an ideal caseload size if valued results matter. It also states that an ideal caseload size can only be accomplished in conjunction with a determination of ideal workload measures for a local jurisdiction. And, offender risk level, geography of jurisdiction, staff competencies and other factors will impact workload. The authors provide a list of policy recommendations that should be followed in establishing an ideal caseload size for a jurisdiction. These recommendations may be helpful to the Department in addressing one of its major challenges.

The experience of jurisdictions such as Multnomah County (Portland), Oregon may also be helpful as they have shifted their focus to predictors of chronic juvenile offenders and targeted interventions with high risk juvenile and adult offenders. Another guide is "Juvenile Probation: The Workforce of the Juvenile Justice System" which was published by OJJDP in 1996. This publication reported that the national average juvenile probation caseload was forty-one.

RECOMMENDATION #9: Determine ideal workload measures; evaluate caseloads and resources in terms of best practices nationally and, more importantly, in terms of what is required in caseload size and resource allocation to achieve the overall goals of the Department and publicly valued outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION #10: Conduct an analysis of caseload size for the varying levels of supervision, contact, and other requirements for case supervision; articulate what are the realistic requirements, and publish those requirements along with measures of compliance.

FINDING: Stakeholders blame problems in the delivery of services in part on deficiencies in manpower and in part on the Department's organizational culture.

There are strongly expressed views by other entities in the County about the Department's delivery of services, including those from key stakeholders, judicial officers, community-based organizations, and group home providers. The comments range from statements such as the following, "Individual POs (probation officers) are wonderful, when it is a good individual all of the things happen as they should with delivery of services" and "if probation had the personnel and manpower they could do a better job of providing services," to "probation does not seem to have a continuum of care, not clear how a kid's case is managed, screened" and "some of the malaise in the department is 'we can't do it,' 'the union will fight it;' follow a case and see that people have dropped the ball."

There is an observation that it is hard to change attitudes, the philosophy and mission may sound good, but services are dollar driven and they may not be a good match for what needs to be done. One person raises the question for the probation department, "who is your client?" observing that the answer to this question affects the work – is it the kids or the Board of Supervisors? The statement is made that the directives do not make it down to the line and there is no organization from the bottom up to use the ideas of the line staff.

b. Resources and Services for Juvenile Probationers

FINDING: There is a lack of resources for juveniles in the areas of mental health, substance abuse, home-based, and community-based services.

A consistent theme running through nearly all interviews with key stakeholders was the lack of resources for juveniles in the areas of mental health, education, substance abuse, home-based, and community-based services. However, two-thirds (65%) of the juvenile staff respondents to the employee survey, agree or strongly agree and 35% disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that "juvenile probationers have access to treatment resources that meet their particular needs". These respondents answered the open-ended question, "What services are needed for probationers that do not exist at this time?" with replies that included mental health, substance abuse, education, aftercare, family engagement and reunification, transportation, gang, job and vocational training, quality counseling, sex offender, mentoring, domestic violence, anger management, and community-based services. Following are examples of responses from four staff respondents:

"Need an appropriate substance abuse model for juveniles. Need more mental health services in our camps and in the community. Need fair and equal services for probation minors as in comparison to DCFS. (Example: KINGAP) Need mentors for placement minors. Need a better education system for minors, especially those with Special ED needs and ESL. Probation minors are stigmatized. I could go on forever..."

"There is a severe need to develop and implement an overall approach to provide family engagement in our work with juveniles. Team Decision Making is not utilized by the department. Mental Health resources are critical but do not exist for our more seriously impaired youth."

"Video or electronic reporting to a face-to-face probation officer from distant locations. Substance abuse testing throughout the probation period including placement, all of supervision and after-care release from camp or placement. Mentoring or big brother type programs in order to give minors a sense that adults care about them even if it were to be Deputy Probation Officers who would voluntarily do this for overtime."

"Resources for Gay/Lesbian juvenile probationers Employment resources for juvenile probationers Group/Individual/Family Therapy for Juvenile Probationers and their family at reduced cost or free Parenting Classes. Greater resources are needed for relapse prevention/substance abuse education for juveniles. Mentoring/Role Model Programs are needed for juveniles. Early detection of Learning Disabilities and educational assistance (tutoring/drop-out prevention) is needed. Anger Management both for adults and minors in the home. Transportation for therapy sessions. Transportation for medical services. General relief funds for clothing of juvenile release back into the community. Quality work agency and training programs. Counseling regarding emancipation programs, becoming independent. Quality tattoo removal programs. More Probation Officers in the home, added supervision on the streets. Probation Officer should be involved in the home life getting services for those who need it. Better management or CBO contracted with Probation. Possibly one location where all services can be provided."

Mental Health and Substance Abuse
As to mental health and substance abuse resources specifically, the key stakeholders highlight these resources as lacking for juveniles, including a particular concern about these resources in the camps. The response to the employee survey presents a different view, at least in field probation. Approximately 70% of the juvenile employees who responded to the survey agree or strongly agree with the two statements that "juvenile probationers have access to mental health resources while on probation" and "juvenile probationers have access to substance abuse resources while on probation". However, in the open ended question regarding what services are needed but do not exist, mental health and substance abuse services were cited among the needed services.

Perhaps some of the difference of opinion can be explained by whether the juveniles actually get to the resources. The case reviewers' observations based on the file contents and case notes and statements by some key stakeholders suggest that the probation

officers may make the assessment of need, but the follow through from assessment to referral to actually getting the juvenile to the services may be lacking. The delinquency judicial officers report that the reasons given by the juveniles as to why they haven't gotten court-ordered services are: the DPO doesn't return their calls, waiting lists, language barriers, and transportation. This problem was identified in the camps also. In a focus group meeting with camp residents, it was reported

> "we don't receive any services (half of the individuals in the group agreed); if we have a dirty drug test, they just send us to camp, the court ordered certain services – like anger management and counseling and my PO (probation officer) didn't refer me to the services."

It is anticipated that additional funding will be forthcoming under California's Proposition 63 for mental health services that focus on this population as a priority. A priority for funding is to address transition age youth in probation, including those children in the probation camps.

c. <u>Resources and Services for Adult Probationers</u>

FINDING: The delivery of services to adults is hampered as much by the Department's capacity to identify and refer probationers to services as it is by a lack of resources.

The key stakeholders describe the unmet needs of juveniles more in terms of a lack of resources and services whereas they describe the unmet needs of adults more in terms of what is wrong with the approach to serving adults. The approach to serving adults is criticized because it involves too little identification of what is needed to help the probationer by way of programs and services and the approach should be moving more toward rehabilitation. Some observe that there simply is no program for adults. It is stated that the caseloads are so high (40% of the caseload is banked with a ratio of 750 cases to one probation officer) that the interventions are perfunctory at best. Concern has been raised about public safety as well as the needs of adult probationers. Adults need more help than what is provided and the enforcement of conditions is not sufficient to produce good outcomes. The Department is taking steps to address this with initiatives such as targeted case management, a WEB resource directory, and a plan to develop a risk and resiliency tool, but the caseload numbers are too high for people to believe that there can be significant progress on these fronts.

The employees from the adult arena who responded to the survey present a mixed view as to resources for adults. In response to the statement that adult probationers have access to resources that meet their criminogenic needs, 45% agree or strongly agree, 48% disagree or strongly disagree, and 7% do not know. Thirty-nine percent (39%) of these same respondents answered the open-ended question, "What services are needed for probationers that do not exist at this time?"   Their answers included mental health, substance abuse, dual diagnosis (mental and substance abuse), housing, and sex offender, with a major emphasis on employment resources and job counseling.   Following are examples of responses from 6 employees working in the adult arena:

"Help for the dual diagnosis defendant. Most of our homeless population have mental problems and are drug addicted. Job referral and housing referrals are needed for adults."

"More long term residential drug treatment programs."

"reliable job resources/referrals that lead to employment."

"Please note: Services exist. They are questionable. Different parts of the city and surrounding communities offer better services. Residential drug centers don't really exist in "South L.A." There are board and care centers which are not on Probation lists but defendants go to them because they have no other places to stay. These board and care facilities take the general relief checks and provide literally no other service. Safe housing is needed. Mental health centers are needed. Drug programs with a residential program are essential. Counselors are needed just for developing positive life skills. So much is lacking in this community of Watts/South L.A."

"Although there are some employment agencies that help assist the probationer's with felony convictions to find jobs, it my belief that there are not enough agencies out there. Especially, near the San Gabriel Valley Area. More job coordinators are also needed with in the department, I only know of one. Also, more affordable counseling is needed for those unemployed probationers."

"A better communication of resources available to the probationer would be helpful. Group (HELP) (SUPPORT) meetings for probationers to share various problems the probationer encounters that may aid in his rehabilitation. Evaluation of work skills to help the probationer obtain employment Training programs to help develop skills. Expansion of the PAAWS and JAAWS program."

As to how to address this issue of resource and service delivery for adults, 51% of the respondents to the employee survey from the adult arena agree or strongly agree with the statement that it would be better to target the available resources to the 18-25 year olds, 38% disagree or strongly disagree, and 11% do not know.

Q5.12 The assignment of a probation officer in criminal courtrooms to identify specific treatment referrals would help adult probationers get services (Adult Respondents)

Do Not Know
5.00%

Strongly Disagree
3.00%

Disagree
15.00%

Strongly Agree
31.00%
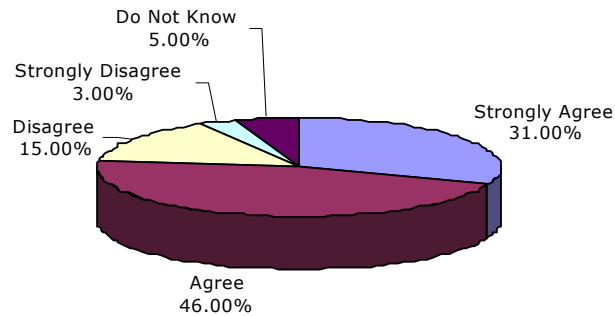
Agree
46.00%

Thirty-one percent (31%) strongly agree and 46% agree with the statement that the assignment of a probation officer in criminal courtrooms to identify specific treatment referrals would help adult probationers get services, 15% disagree, 3% strongly disagree, and 5% do not know. So there is a strong support for a new way of doing business that might help adult probationers.

d. Access to and Use of Community Resources

FINDING: There is no objective resource inventory and analysis of resources available for adult and juvenile probationers.

No objective resource inventory or analysis exists to address questions regarding the availability, suitability, and accessibility of service resources for adult and juvenile probationers. CWLA was provided with a paper listing of resources for the Department categorized by type of service and service area. But, there are no data collected regarding needed services for individual probationers, whether or not the services were provided, and, if not provided, the reasons for it.

This lack of data made it difficult to gather data on service needs, availability and delivery. Thus, the findings regarding resources and service delivery are based largely on interviews and meetings with people inside and out of the Department who work in this system.

FINDING: There is strong consensus internally in the Department and among other stakeholders about the need for more community resources. Both key stakeholders interviewed and the Department's employees reported variability in access to resources

related to geography, with some locations in the county having better access to resources than others.

FINDING: The probation staff have limited awareness of the resources that do exist within the community for probationers.

FINDING: There is no guidance provided to the probation staff as to what are the best resources to use based on past performance of successful outcomes with probationers.

FINDING: Probation officers believe that the Probation Department should coordinate with community-based organizations in defined geographic areas to target the needs of juveniles in that area.

There seems to be a strong consensus about the need for more community resources for both the adult and the juvenile populations. This is a view expressed by the key stakeholders for the juvenile population particularly, it is a view held by the community-based organizations themselves in that they believe they are underutilized in some cases, and it is a view held by both the adult and juvenile probation officers. When asked whether they agree with the statement that adequate community resources exist to address the needs of juvenile probationers, 37% of juvenile employees agree or strongly agree, 59% disagree or strongly disagree, and 4% do not know. When employees working in the adult arena were asked to respond to the same statement, but as it applied to adult probationers, 37% percent agree or strongly agree, 54% disagree or strongly disagree, and 9% do not know.

Q5.8 Adequate community resources exist to address the needs of juvenile probationers (Juvenile Respondents)

Do Not Know 4.35%
Strongly Agree 6.09%
Strongly Disagree 18.26%
Agree 30.43%
Disagree 40.87%
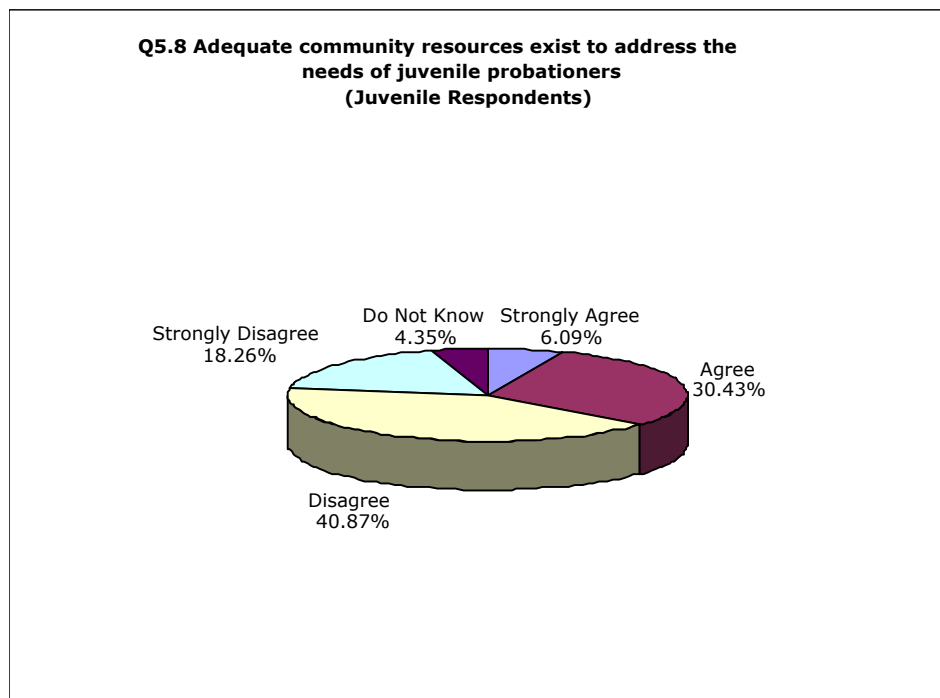
**Q5.9 Adequate community resources exist to address the
needs of adult probationers
(Adult Respondents)**

Do Not Know
9.00%

Strongly Agree
5.00%

Strongly Disagree
15.00%

Agree
32.00%

Disagree
39.00%
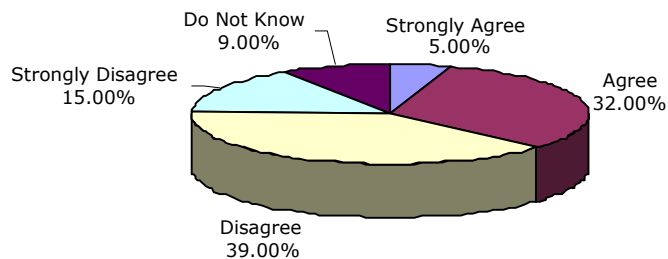
Another dimension to the access and use of community resources is the level of awareness as to their availability for probationers. The judicial officers report that deputy probation officers (DPOs) don't know about local programs and services and that both probation officers and court officers need better training on service availability. When asked whether they agreed with the statement that "probation officers are provided with current information regarding adequate community resources in order to provide services to probationers," 37% of the juvenile employees agree or strongly agree, 59% disagree or strongly disagree, and 4% do not know. When employees working in the adult arena were asked to respond to the same statement, 44% agree or strongly agree, 49% disagree or strongly disagree, and 7% do not know. The open-ended question regarding services needed resulted in some responses specific to this issue. Examples of those responses from 3 employees follow:

> "A complete update on community resources, in treatment, jobs, a referral bank with a contact person."

> "I believe the probation department should maintain a data base of community based organizations that anyone within the department could utilize and readily access to refer clients for appropriate services. The probation department appears to be slowly transitioning into using computers to assist deputies with their daily duties. The data base would further assist the probation department in providing more effective services for the community. The list should hold information for both juvenile and adult services. Often times I see deputies asking each other where to refer persons for specific services. Presently, deputies exchange xerox copies of lists which they have acquired over the years, but which are sometimes out dated. Every so often the list should be updated with current telephone numbers and contact persons. I believe this would be a valuable tool for the department, the probationers and the community. Often times the probation

26

department receives calls from persons who are not on probation but are seeking information to where they can be referred for specific help. By providing this information I believe people can be assisted before their problems end them up in court or jail. To some degree I believe this can be used as an intervention tool and yet another positive program provided by our department."

"More community service agencies... but/and... agencies that are held accountable for their effectiveness and response to their contractual responsibilities."

The most significant finding in the survey of juvenile and adult employees is regarding what the relationship should be between the Department and community-based organizations. Ninety-six percent (96%) of the juvenile respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement "the probation department should coordinate with community-based organizations in defined geographic areas to target the needs of juveniles in that area."

Q7.7 The Probation Department should coordinate with community based organizations in defined geographic areas to target the needs of juveniles in that area
(Juvenile Respondents)

Strongly Disagree 0.90%
Do Not Know 0.90%
Disagree 1.80%
Strongly Agree 48.65%
Agree 47.75%
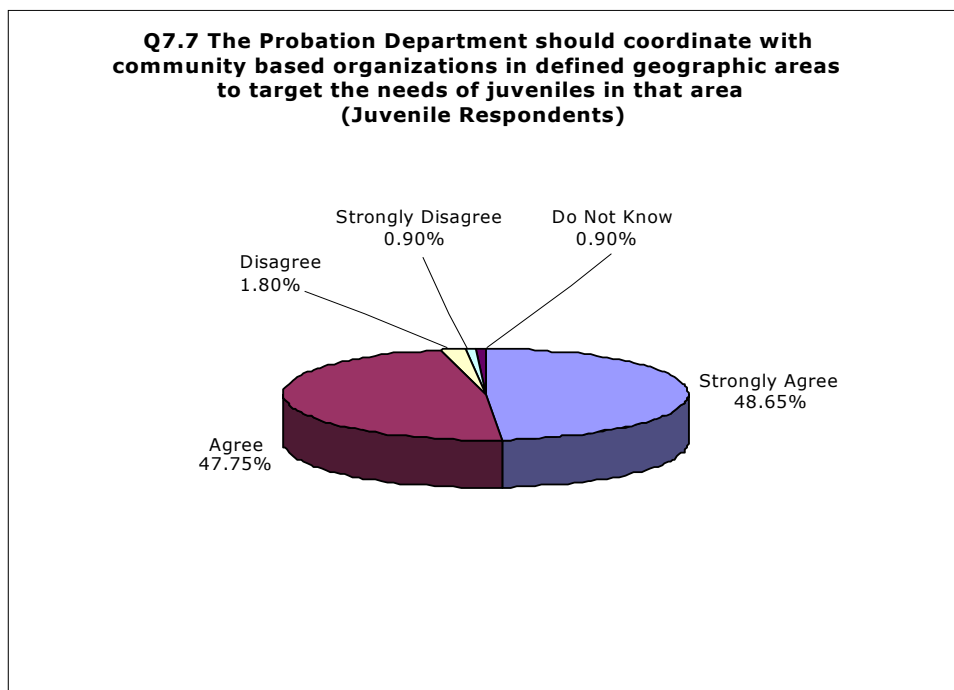
A very significant percentage of adult probation staff (85%), like the juvenile respondents, agree or strongly agree with the statement "the probation department should coordinate with community-based organizations in defined geographic areas to target the needs of juveniles in that area." However, 13% respond to this statement that they do not know.

Q7.7 The Probation Department should coordinate with community based organizations in defined geographic areas to target the needs of juveniles in that area (Adult Respondents)

Do Not Know
13.13%

Strongly Disagree
0.00%

Disagree
2.02%

Strongly Agree
32.32%

Agree
52.53%
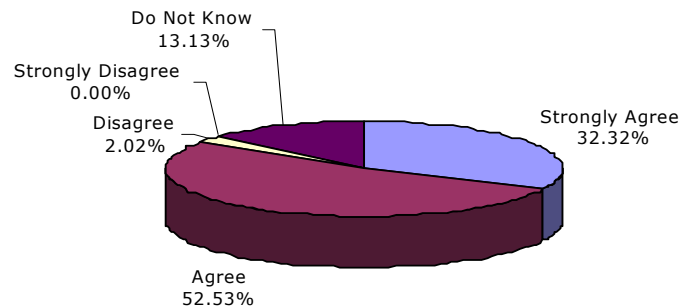
Other Jurisdictions form Strong Partnerships with Community-based Organizations

To move its efforts in the direction of strong partnerships with community-based organizations, the Department could consider the experiences of other jurisdictions. One example of a probation department that has developed a comprehensive continuum of community-based services and sanctions for youthful offenders is Tarrant County (Ft. Worth), Texas. In 1992 the Tarrant County Juvenile Probation Department entered into a partnership with a community-based organization. This program is designed as an alternative to both pre-trial detention and to incarceration as well as other out-of-home placements following adjudication. The community-based organization program model trains and assigns local community residents to serve as advocates for troubled teens. These advocates mentor and monitor the youth, and they facilitate a child/family team including neighbors, volunteers, professional staff, relatives, parents, and youth themselves. In their first year of operation, commitments from the target area to the equivalent of CYA decreased 44%. In 2000, 78% of the youth participating in this program did not incur a more serious delinquent charge. The cost-effective continuum in this jurisdiction now includes community service restitution and monetary restitution, family preservation, juvenile drug court, non-residential sex offender treatment and intensive supervision probation.

Cook County (Chicago), Illinois is another jurisdiction that has developed a cost effective continuum of community-based organizations. They have safely reduced the use of detention, cut in half the proportion of youth that fail to appear for hearings, and decreased case processing time by 35 percent.

RECOMMENDATION #11: Set up a database that clearly documents the resources needed for each case, whether a referral is made to those services, whether or not the services were provided, and, if not provided, was it because they were not available. This data collection effort will allow for a resource inventory to be made regularly to identify gaps in service/resources for planning new program development within the Department and/or in collaboration with community-based organizations.

RECOMMENDATION #12: Develop an electronic database of community-based organizations available to provide services to adult and juvenile probationers. In addition to the characteristics of the organizations, include the capability to track the use of the organizations and their effectiveness. Use the information along with the resource inventory contemplated in the recommendation above to continuously identify need/gaps in community-based resources.

RECOMMENDATION #13: Develop formalized criteria and a process for utilization of community resources. Resources should be selected that reflect evidence-based practices and meet the philosophy of the department. Resources that utilize strategies that have not been found effective for the probation population, and more specifically with either juveniles or adults, and do not meet the philosophy of the department should not be utilized.

RECOMMENDATION #14: Develop a model for collaboration between the Department and community-based organizations in defined geographic areas to target the needs of juveniles in that area, develop evidence-based programming, jointly deliver services, and evaluate outcomes.

e. Juveniles Report Their Probation Experiences

CWLA conducted focus groups and interviews with juvenile probationers from field supervision and juveniles in suitable placement. It also conducted a focus group meeting with camp residents from one camp. The camp residents' comments are included in this report in the section on Camps. The following is drawn from the field supervision and placement youth:

The juveniles were asked to respond to several questions (Appendix E) regarding their experiences with the Probation Department. There was no consensus of views developed as to their experiences. Individuals describe as helpful: education-related support, placement and living stability, help with life behaviors and decision-making, drug treatment, safety, work experience and skill building, help with relationships, and personal support. Individuals describe as not helpful: lack of services, lack of personal help and understanding, unnecessarily harsh or unfair treatment, and exercise of authority and restrictions.

Examples of their comments about the positive performance of staff who work with them are that the probation officer provides recommendations and is supportive, goes over accomplishments and helps youth stay on task, shows respect, provides help to stay clean

and sober, and gives an extra chance. The more negative comments are about the poor use of authority, perceived favoritism, yelling at and threatening juveniles, and lack of services.

When youth were asked what would help them stay out of trouble and what life changes they wished the Probation Department could help them make, their answers fell into the following themes: education, mentoring, skill building, decision-making and behavior change, employment and employment preparation, productive activities, school-related assistance, and other supportive services. Some specific examples of assistance that they would like include:

- help to get into programs
- good advice and direction
- program after school with projects and activities
- a safe place for sports and activities
- graduate from high school (preferred) or get a GED
- connect with life improvement opportunities—(such as) college, skills training, leadership opportunities
- find and provide a safe home placement

f. Juvenile Probation Staff Views on Improved Service Delivery

FINDING: Employees are committed to improving probation services.

Responses from juvenile staff to the open-ended question, "What specific ideas do you have for the improved delivery of probation services that you believe will result in better client outcomes?" provide evidence of their commitment to improving probation services. Following are some of their responses:

> "The maximum number of probationers a community-based probation officer should be required to supervise is seventy-five (75). Currently, in my unit, six of my DPOs have caseloads ranging from eighty (80) to one hundred and thirty three (133) cases. How can quality services be delivered to probationers with these numbers?---it is just not possible. Also, jcms is just not user friendly and too slow & needs to be trashed. If the department listed what is expected from each DPO & SDPO each month & then did a time study of the length of each task, I am sure they will find that what they are asking is just not possible."

> "To improve service delivery of probation services the department would have to collaborate with the best community based organizations, and other county facilities that operate under the same umbrella, so that everyone is striving for the same outcome which will result in better client outcomes."

> "Having access to information regarding services being offered to the minor or his/her entire family by different departments/agencies would be of benefit especially when dealing with juveniles. This would avoid the duplication of services and also provide a better picture to more accurately assess the needs.
> More community-based agencies."

"More individualized case planning and management would be of great benefit. Many DPOs spend too much time gathering and preparing statistical reports to have the desired benefit. Interagency collaboration with respect to case planning/management is highly desirable."

"Smaller caseloads, better training for probation officers, encouragement by the department for employees to attend training workshops and conferences, improved computer services and support."

"Probation department to create Community Centers that provide evidence based interventions to clients. Centers would adhere to Risk, Need and Responsivity principles and would provide interventions accordingly. Community Centers would have a partnership with Mental Health in order to ensure that all interventions are based in Evidence Based Practices and curriculum is clearly defined. (This way you can ensure that every minor is receiving the same program) Probation would be better able to track outcomes and progress, rather than relying on community based organizations that may or may not be utilizing Evidence Based Practices. Begin with a pilot program and eventually expand centers to all 5 supervisoral districts. This could be a halfway point between remaining in the community and a Camp Community placement order."

II.   BEST PRACTICES AND BENCHMARKING

At the current time there is no standardized process for establishing best practices in juvenile justice programming.   Best practices have over the years been defined as the "collective experience and wisdom of the field rather than scientifically tested knowledge" (U.S. Department of Justice and Crime and Justice Institute, 2004). Increasingly, the terms best practices and evidence-based practices have been used interchangeably, but evidence-based practice implies that there are definable outcomes, a system of measurement, and evaluation that documents whether the programs or practices have an impact on the achievement of desired outcomes.

Best practices in juvenile justice are also described as those programs and intervention strategies that a careful review of the evidence-based literature identifies as producing the largest or most cost-effective impacts on future delinquency and criminality. The evidence-based literature in juvenile justice consists of a number of reviews of the evaluation literature along with detailed descriptions of specific program models that have been identified as promising or proven (Andrews et al., 1990; Aos et al., 2001; Elliot, 1997; Lipsey & Wilson, 1998; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001).

A.   The Department's Programmatic Strengths, Promising Practices

During the initial phase of the program audit, CWLA requested from the Department evaluation reports containing program and client outcome data for the past 5 years to assist in the identification of strengths of its programs and practices. CWLA received the evaluation of Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) funded programs, which represent only a portion of programs and services provided by the Department to its client population. By its own account, the Department points out the need for a greater capacity to evaluate its work. The Department primarily measures work process outcomes. It also

measures outcomes related to recidivism and school performance in some instances, however, those outcomes generally are not evaluated in relation to specific programs or practices. Therefore, the reporting on this topic is primarily subjective, based on the statements of stakeholders and consumers.

In the interviews with key stakeholders, including people from inside and outside of the department and the judicial officers, interviewees were asked to describe promising practices and programmatic strengths of the department. In response to the question what are the programmatic strengths or promising practices, many stakeholders responded with remarks about the general quality of the probation officers and the Department's general efforts. They note that there are "some great probation officers - it can be done," "some excellent court officers," and "a lot of people out there who care about kids." They report that the Department is pretty good at getting kids off the streets and good with suppression activities with high profile cases because it is responsive and knows the communities.

Stakeholders stated that the strongest Departmental programs are those that put POs on site at schools and at placements. The school-based probation supervision program, the contract probation services and the JJCPA funded programs were identified as strong programs. The school-based probation services are described as being based on evidence-based practice, monitoring behavior, daily attendance, and performance.

Contract probation services for which local cities take funds from their own budgets and directly contract for probation services are perceived as very effective. The result is that PO caseloads are lower, and that assigned probation officers who become committed to that city, stay longer, and are often seen as heroes to individual council members and others concerned with the community's safety.

Stakeholders also cite the programs funded under JJCPA as having good programming in mental health assessment, but not enough treatment resources. It is noted that the high cost of many of these programs results in availability to only a small percentage of juveniles.

Other programs identified as strengths of the Department are pre-trial services in the adult bureau; house arrest in juvenile; the WRAPAROUND program, a service collaboration involving the Departments of Children and Family Services, Mental Health, and the Probation Department; transitional living; the mobile gang unit; and the specialty courts: drug court and mental health/special needs court.

In the camps, the Kirby Center, an intensive treatment program for juveniles on suitable placement orders, is cited as a strong program by many people. They identified other strengths in the camp program as 1) saving the County money; 2) an advantage over other counties that only have California Youth Authority (CYA) and probation as dispositional options; 3) the specialization in the camps tailored to the interests of juveniles (e.g. "some amazing successful sports and arts intervention" which has drawn positive feedback from both the juveniles and observers); and 4) "good at turning kids

around because we give them basic skills, structure, discipline, pat on the back when they do something well."

The advent of the assessment tool, LARRC (Los Angeles Risk and Resiliency Checklist) and family group decision-making are cited as promising practices. The LARRC has been piloted and validated, and adapted to the Los Angeles community. Family group decision-making is cited as a promising practice because of its goal to use the family's resources to help control the youth's behavior.

B.   Best Practices

FINDING: The Department either operates or contracts with a wide variety of programs intended to reduce the future criminal behaviors of those in its charge. Few of these programs, however, have undergone rigorous evaluation to determine their effectiveness and the Department does not have a system of performance measurement that reinforces the use of evidence-based practices and the achievement of desired client outcomes.

FINDING: The Department has initiated training programs to support awareness of best practices and the skill development of staff in the areas of assessment, adolescent development, cognitive-behavioral therapy and multi-systemic therapy.

FINDING: The Department has moved some probationers into evidence-based practices such as Multi-systemic Therapy (MST) and Functional Family Therapy (FFT), but it does not have a comprehensive plan for how it will incorporate evidence-based practices throughout its probation services.

FINDING: Over half of the juvenile employees who responded to the survey believe that probation officers are knowledgeable about evidence-based practices and approximately 75% express confidence that the availability of evidence-based practices would result in greater use and would allow some juveniles to stay out of placement.

FINDING: The Department's implementation of a validated assessment instrument, the LA Risk and Resiliency Checklist (LARRC) for juvenile probationers is a best practice.

In correctional agencies throughout the country, administrators and practitioners alike are talking about how they are moving their organizations toward "best practices" and "evidence-based practices". Many administrators and practitioners associate evidence-based practices only with "off the shelf" programs such as Multi-systemic Therapy (MST), Multi-dimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC), and Functional Family Therapy (FFT). This contributes to a belief that implementation of these programs, often without sufficient regard for the integrity of their key replication components, constitutes best practice. A further complication is the absence of evaluation rigor in many instances to document that programs or practices are producing good outcomes for adults or

juveniles.   Best practices can, and should be, those program efforts developed by the Probation Department and in the Los Angeles community that have a proven performance in relation to the achievement of successful client outcomes.

In the employee survey, about half of the juvenile respondents (52%) agree or strongly agree with the statement that "probation services are based on best practices", 36% disagree or strongly disagree, and 12% respond that they do not know. Fifty-seven percent (57%) agree or strongly agree with the statement that probation officers are knowledgeable about evidence-based practices and their impact on recidivism, 32% disagree or strongly disagree, and 11% respond that they do not know. It is notable that 76% of respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement that "evidence-based practices would be applied to all probationers if there was adequate funding", but 14% respond that they do not know. Seventy-three percent (73%) agree or strongly agree with the statement that the availability of evidence-based practices in the community would allow some juveniles to stay out of placement, but again, 14% respond that they do not know.

a. <u>Best Practice Benchmarking</u>

One method of benchmarking the Department's current programs is to compare their critical components or elements with those identified as proven or promising in the evidence-based or "what works" literature. Another is to review any evaluations that have been conducted on the programs at issue.

The Los Angeles County Probation Department either operates or contracts for a wide variety of programs intended to reduce the future criminal behaviors of those in its charge. Few of these programs, however, have undergone rigorous evaluation to determine their effectiveness and the Department does not have a system of performance measurement that reinforces the use of evidence-based practices and the achievement of desired client outcomes.

CWLA conducted a benchmarking exercise with most of the Department's Executive Leadership Team and Special Assistants to carry out the method described above, to compare the critical elements of their programs with those identified as proven or promising in the evidence-based or "what works" literature. The group was first asked to identify the programs requiring the greatest total resources by the Department, those costing the most per case, and those that were thought to be the most effective. This part of the exercise resulted in the following:

    <u>Most expensive in terms of total dollars</u>
        -Camp
        -School-based probation
        -Community-based supervision
        -Suitable Placement
        -Juvenile Hall
        -Adult Supervision

Most expensive per juvenile
        -Gang caseload
        -Suitable placement
        -Camp community transition program (CCTP)
        -Special needs court
        -YSA-substance abuse program
        -GS-COMM-gender specific services in the community

Most effective
        -School-based probation
        -Suitable placement
        -Camp-CCTP
        -Pregnant and parenting teens
        -Inside out writers

The group was then divided into 3 small groups and asked to select 4 programs, one from each of the three lists and one additional from any one of the lists. Then the groups were asked to identify the most critical elements or components for each of these programs.

The first thing to be noted about this exercise is that there was considerable agreement among groups regarding which programs were the most important to them. All three groups picked two of the same programs to rate – Suitable Placement and Camp-Community Transition Program (CCTP). However, there the similarity ends. No other program was picked by more than one group. And, there was little similarity in the components identified by the groups as critical for each of these programs. For example, all groups identified "assessment" and "quality providers" as critical elements for "Suitable Placement"—placement out of the home in a suitable environment, usually a group home. But, for the other 17 elements, only "permanency planning" was identified by more than one group. There was a little more overlap in identifying critical elements for the Camp-Community Transition Program (CCTP). All groups agreed that "involvement of the entire family" was a critical element; two groups agreed that "safe and secure", "assessment", and "case plan and transition planning" were critical elements.

The groups were asked to score each of the critical elements in relation to the elements identified as proven or promising in the evidence-based practice or "what works" literature which was provided to them (Appendix I – Summary of "What Works" for Delinquency Prevention and Intervention). The inflated scores for the majority of the elements of most of the programs selected for evaluation were surprising. The CWLA consultants remarked upon it at the time asking them if they really believed the program elements warranted such high scores. The average group scores for Suitable Placement were 2.75, 3.0 and 2.8, where a 3.0 is perfect – the score you would assign to a well implemented Blueprints program such as FFT (Alexander et al., 1998) or MST (Henggler et al., 1998). The average scores assigned to CCTP for the 3 groups were 3.0, 3.0 and 2.75 – again almost perfect scores. Yet upon review of the list of program elements that

are identified as critical, it is difficult to find any that are directly supported by the literature. For example, family reunification is probably a good idea for CCTP. However, generalized efforts toward that goal in the absence of a well-tested program like FFT or MST would normally be scored as a 1 at best. The same is true for mentoring, home assessment, and the use of quality providers.

In a discussion of this exercise with the Executive Leadership Team several weeks later, participants reported a lack of clarity for the purpose of scoring the Department's program elements against the elements in the "what works" literature. According to their account, scores were based on their own beliefs as to the performance of those programs and elements. Participants acknowledged scoring program elements high (i.e., Suitable Placement, CCTP, and some other areas) despite the absence of performance and evaluation data to confirm this rating. In the Department's own camp recidivism report, it states that "a more thorough analysis of the camp aftercare program…may be necessary" because the recidivism rates are higher in the first 6 months after release. It goes on to state "a greater emphasis and focus on intensive supervision and treatment resources during the first six months after release to reinforce the progress made in Camp may positively impact recidivism rates" (LA County Camp Recidivism Report, 2004). These statements necessarily bring into question the scoring of "intensive supervision" and "transitional planning" as a 3 by the participants in the benchmarking exercise. It should be noted that the average scores for the elements in some programs which were selected and scored by just one group were lower (e.g. mobile gang intervention-average score 2; school-based supervision-average score 2.4; and adult supervision-average score 1.7).

Aside from the benchmarking exercise, the other direct evidence regarding the content and quality of LACPD programs is the recent evaluation report by RAND (Turner et al., 2005) on LA County programs funded under California's Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA). The report provides descriptions of the programs funded with allocations from JJCPA. These programs were developed to address gaps in local services and were to be based on effective program elements. The legislation specified the six outcome measures for reporting the performance of these programs as 1) successful completion of probation, 2) arrest, 3) violation of probation, 4) incarceration, 5) successful completion of restitution, and 6) successful completion of community service. The report states that overall there are successful outcomes reported on most of the measures, but acknowledges that there were limitations in the evaluation designs such that the program effects might be attributable to factors outside of the programs themselves.

An observation that can be made as to the low Scientific Methods Score for most of the evaluations, the score that each evaluation would receive on the Scientific Methods Scale developed by researchers at the University of Maryland (Sherman et al., 1997). All of the evaluations would score as either a 2 or a 3. Evaluations utilizing a simple pre/post outcome measures with no control group are rated a 2. Those with a comparison are rated a 3 (Sherman et al., 1997). It has been shown that the less rigorous evaluation designs are more likely to produce erroneous positive effects and less likely to identify

harmful effects (Greenwood, 2005). The minimum standard for identifying a promising program for the University of Maryland study was significant outcome effects in at least 2 evaluations of level 3 or higher, and the preponderance of the evidence supporting effectiveness. Only five of the CJJCPA evaluations for Los Angeles County were rated as sufficiently rigorous (level 3). The second point to be made is the lack of statistically significant outcomes for most of the evaluations, even with their low degree of rigor. Four of the level 3 evaluations showed no significant effects. One (CCTP) showed fewer arrests for the program youth but more probation violations and returns to camp. Overall, the JJCPA programs represent an important effort by Probation to develop more effective programming for specific population groups. The evaluation report provides some evidence that this goal was achieved but is far from conclusive due to the relatively weak evaluation designs that were used for many of the programs, and the small sample sizes that in many cases were not sufficient to produce statistically significant results. Although there are certainly limitations to the evaluation of these programs, this effort is an excellent move in the direction of developing evidence-based practice. It has a defined set of outcomes, a system of performance measurement, and a commitment to program evaluation. It presents one foundation for the Department to build its efforts to plan and evaluate all of its program and practice efforts to be evidence-based.

Rating the Department's Evidence-Based Practice

Best practices for large juvenile justice agencies serving a variety of youthful offenders consist of three interrelated components: 1) Evidence-based programming; 2) an evidence-based assessment process; and 3) an evidence-based assignment process for matching youth to appropriate programs.

Programs are the organized sets of activities and procedures designed to produce positive changes in youth behavior. In order to be evidence-based a program must be a replication of a proven model, with appropriate quality assurance measures to insure that it meets the specifications of the model, or are supported by positive outcome data from an appropriate evaluation.

The use of a reliable, standardized assessment instrument is required to: distinguish among youth of various risk levels, identify those risk factors most responsible for a youth's delinquent behavior, measure the impact of programming changes, and identify shifts or changes in the characteristics of incoming youth.

Given the wide differences in the characteristics and needs of individual youth, and the differing capabilities of individual programs, the total effects on criminal behavior achieved by any set of an agency's program will depend on the degree to which that agency is able to assign youth to those programs that will do them the most good.

With regard to assessment, the Los Angeles County Probation Department has recently completed validation of a reasonably good instrument, the Los Angeles Risk and Resiliency Checklist (LARRC) that has been successfully used in other locations. The Department has trained a large number of deputies in its use. In academic terms, for the

quality of its assessment process, it would rate as very good. In order to achieve a full A+ rating, the department will have to develop and implement a plan for assessing youth at multiple points to track their progress.

The Department could take the use of the LARRC a step further and use it to help identify what programs work best for what youth. In a recent presentation in Los Angeles, Robert Barnoski, Ph.D. from the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) demonstrated how one can map the problem domain (similar to the LAARC) with research-based juvenile justice programs like those noted for high risk youth. For example, when the family functioning is a primary problem, the recommended intervention is FFT, MST, and Mentoring. The findings from (WSIPP) initial studies show that FFT delivered competently reduces 18-month felony recidivism by 38 percent, ART delivered competently reduces it by 24% and coordination of services reduces 12-month felony recidivism by 57%.

The department needs improvement in its development, use, and evaluation of evidence-based programs. The results of the benchmarking exercise help to illustrate that the Department has not embraced a discipline of evidence-based performance measurement that provides them with information to plan and evaluate programs. The Department needs to develop a greater capacity for adopting proven models of evidence-based practice and for providing greater rigor in their ongoing evaluation. It also needs to begin evaluating some of the its own core programs by comparing them to more effective or less expensive alternatives, particularly the camps, the camp community transition program and "suitable placements".

A potential alternative to the camps would be some form of intensive community programming such as FFT or MST. These 2 programs would also be potential alternatives for the current community transition programs. The most promising alternative to group home placements could be Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care. For each of these 3 alternatives, eligible youth could be randomly assigned between the current programs and the most appropriate alternative.

The Probation Department refers youth to the Department of Mental Health which currently provides programming for a small number of juveniles in both MST and FFT. The highest need youth with parents willing to participate are referred to these programs. At any given time, there are 32 juvenile probationers in MST countywide and 120 juvenile probationers in FFT, the capacity for these two programs with the current staffing. In its summary of the MST program (LACDMH, 2004), the Department of Mental Health (DMH) reports positive results on each of six instrumental outcomes in the following domains: 1) parenting skills; 2) family relations; 3) support networks; 4) educational/vocational success; 5) pro-social peers and activities; and 6) duration of problematic behavior(s). It also reports that DMH and the Probation Department are committed to the implementation of Multi-systemic Therapy (MST) in Los Angeles County. The Probation Department executives, however, express frustration at the limited capacity of the Department to implement this program (given the costly ratio of staff to juvenile) for a larger number of juveniles who might benefit from it. The

Department is not, however, comparing the cost of this program to the cost of some its own core programs. What they are doing, according to one of the executives, is trying to take the principles of MST and FFT and integrate them into the supervision provided by the Department's probation officers.

It is not, however, a matter of simply adding more capacity for the "off the shelf" models such as MST and FFT, it is about creating a culture around the implementation of evidence-based practices. The implementation of evidence-based practices should include all of the Department's programming and it should be characterized by definable program and client outcomes and a system of performance measurement that enables the ongoing development and evaluation of programming. An integrated model for implementing evidence-based practice includes evidence-based principles, organizational change and development, and collaboration with other organizations or groups in the community (U.S. Department of Justice and Crime and Justice Institute, 2004). A part of the guidance for this model has been identified previously in the strategies section of this report referencing the eight principles. The National Institute of Corrections and Crime and Justice Institute have entered into a collaborative effort to develop this model for implementing evidence-based practices in criminal justice systems. The following are eight principles from Implementing Evidence-based Practice in Community Corrections based on meta-analysis, cost-benefit analysis, and specific clinical trials.

1. Assess actuarial risk and need.
2. Enhance intrinsic motivation.
3. Target interventions using the risk principle, need principle responsivity principle, dosage and treatment.
4. Skill train with directed practice (cognitive behavioral treatment models).
5. Increase positive reinforcement.
6. Engage ongoing support in natural communities.
7. Measure relevant processes and practices.
8. Provide measurement feedback.

The above principles are for effective interventions. This is only one component of the integrated best practice model. The remaining components are collaboration and organizational development. The lessons learned from sites implementing this model are:

- Organizational Development is crucial.
- Behavior change principles apply to individuals, like offenders and staff, as well as to groups of individuals like organizations and systems.
- Getting and using information is harder than it looks.
- Effective treatment and solid research are NOT incompatible with public safety.
- Accountability and enforcement are NOT incompatible with effective interventions.

Although this model is presented in the criminal justice context, it provides a very useful template for the Department to change its whole organization to a learning organization

whose foundation is evidence-based practice. An initial assessment of the Department's implementation of these principles in adult probation is described in Appendix J.

Because most current programs are not well specified, evaluated, or held to rigorous standards, the Department also would get a low rating in the area of quality assurance. There is simply no way of knowing how specific programs are doing on a week-to-week or month-to-month basis without close monitoring of critical functions. All of the proven program models include rigorous quality assurance procedures. The Department needs to develop or bring in staff with the capability to develop and apply instruments that can be used to assess the quality of individual programs, either through outcome evaluations or process assessments.

Finally, the department would be rated as needing improvement for how well it matches juveniles and programs. It is just beginning to establish policies to guide the assignment process. It could go much further in identifying the type of youth who are most appropriate for different programs, establishing policies to guide the assignment process, and then subjecting them to rigorous testing through ongoing outcome research.

Departmental Initiatives

The Department has initiated training programs to support awareness of best practices and the skill development of staff in the areas of assessment, adolescent development, cognitive-behavioral therapy and multi-systemic therapy. This training is being provided to the camp, aftercare, gang and school-based probation officers. In addition, the Department plans to have in place by the end of the year 2005 a training program for juvenile and adult field probation officers which will be presented in conjunction with the Los Angeles Community College. This training will be for new officers, officers who are transfers (e.g. camp to field), and for the retraining of officers. A Camp training academy has also been initiated for the training of new personnel. To achieve and sustain the organizational and cultural changes associated with best practices will require that the Department develop a comprehensive staff development program. This will include both initial training, training to explain concepts of new practices and tools, opportunities to practice skills, and booster sessions. The Department understands that the proposed changes cannot occur with "one shot" training sessions and will require a long-term investment in staff development.

In the Benchmarking and Best Practices meeting with senior administrative staff, the meeting participants expressed interest in pursuing a number of initiatives based on the material presented and the day's discussions. They included:

- the Blueprints programs (a set of evidence-based programs)
- benchmarking in relation to the LA Risk and Resiliency Checklist (LARRC) and client-focused outcomes
- measuring programs against evidence-based elements – use this to look at redesign of some programs

- Explore Washington State Institute on Public Policy's methodology regarding evidence-based programming and cost effectiveness.
- Multi-dimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) with providers.

RECOMMENDATION #15: Incorporate some reference in its overall mission or policy statements to its intention to follow "best practice" in the delinquency prevention and intervention, and ensure that all programming efforts are evidence-based.

RECOMMENDATION #16: Undertake a systematic study to identify which of the Department's programs work best for particular types of youth, as categorized by LARRC, and turn that information into useful guidance for placement and field staff.

RECOMMENDATION #17: Develop staff responsible for designing, planning or contracting for programs and services to become expert in evidence-based practice and the identification of programs and programming methods that do and do not work.

RECOMMENDATION #18: Develop a comprehensive action plan to align the eight principles for implementing evidence-based practice with the core elements of the Department's programs.

RECOMMENDATION #19: Coordinate with community-based organizations in defined geographic areas when developing evidence-based practices to respond to the needs of juveniles in that area.

RECOMMENDATION #20: Develop more capacity for placements of additional youth in programs providing certified versions of Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Multisystemic Therapy (MST) and Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC), the three proven Blueprints models that are potentially cost-effective alternatives for some youths now being placed in camps or group homes.

RECOMMENDATION #21: Hire or contract with an individual or individuals who are sufficiently trained in evaluation methods to design and implement evaluations of departmental programs.

RECOMMENDATION #22: Develop and implement a comprehensive staff training program to support evidence-based practices throughout the Department.

b. The Camps

The interviews with key stakeholders yielded so many concerns about the operation of the camps that the Auditor-Controller's Office asked CWLA to carry out a limited on-site review to determine whether there was evidence to support the anecdotal reports as to the camps' operation. The issues identified by the key stakeholders consumed 5 of the 18 pages of transcribed responses from the interviews and are summarized below.

Many people expressed concern about the recruiting and training of personnel in the camps, whether quality personnel are being hired in the first instance and whether there is a good program of initial and ongoing training. The Department has expressed some of the same concerns particularly about the training of camp staff before they assume their duties. It has recently instituted a Camp Training Academy to provide the incoming staff with 4 weeks of additional training on top of the core 5 week training that the state requires. This 4-week training will have a strong focus on adolescent development, assessment through the LARRC, and cognitive-behavioral training.

Other concerns expressed by the key stakeholders included treatment and handling of camp residents by the staff, disciplinary procedures, programming, case management, and availability of treatment resources. The access to treatment resources was a theme that was mentioned over and over again, particularly mental health and substance abuse. Also of concern is whether there is good quality and access to education for the residents and whether the working relationship with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) produces good results for kids.

The juveniles in one camp, during a focus group meeting conducted separately from the 2 day on-site review of the camps, reported their experiences of being at camp. They reported some of the positive experiences noting that the camp experience helps them think about their mistakes and helps them change their behavior. Following are some individual remarks:

> "this is the only place that I go to school,"

> "you realize while you are here that it is better to be on the right track or on the right path instead of the path that you are headed on,"

> "I feel safe here,"

> "the experience helps you to honor and respect people," and

> "we get work experience and this helps build responsibility."

These camp residents also reported experiences that they do not perceive as positive or helpful to them noting that most staff do not help or motivate them. Following are some individual remarks:

> "the probation officers – instead of helping us and rehabilitating us, they make it worse,"

> "they don't work with us enough,"

> "it seems there is a battle to see which staff can punish us more-it is a competition to see who can punish us the hardest,"

> "staff tell you that you are in a gang so that they can get you re-filed," and

> "they take out their own personal anger on us."

In response to the question, "What recommendations do you have for improving how the staff works with you," this group of camp residents suggested the following:

- staff need to counsel us, treat us with respect, talk to us, exercise with us
- staff need to give us a chance to explain things
- record and monitor the staff so people can see how they are treating us
- policies, procedures, and practices need to be consistent for all
- leadership has to stop supporting the 're-file' behavior
- leadership needs to support positive work with the client

2 Day On-site Review of Camp Program

FINDING: The stated mission and goals of the Residential Treatment Services Bureau (RTSB) Camp Program do not match the programming and treatment practice at the camps.

FINDING: Current staffing levels are inadequate to achieve the stated goals of the RTSB Camp Program and this is compounded by the methods used to schedule staff.

FINDING: Initial training in de-escalation and restraint techniques is inadequate to ensure that both staff and camp residents are safe. On-going training and staff development is inadequate to ensure achievement of RTSB Camp Program goals.

FINDING: The operation of the education program in the camps is not integrated well with the overall camp experience and goals.

FINDING: The RTSB Camp Program is providing a response to the need for an intermediate sanction alternative to probation in the community or incarceration in the California Youth Authority (CYA).

FINDING: The recently implemented out-of-home screening unit provides an opportunity for enhanced consistency in the screening process for camp placement and is intended to reduce the level of inappropriate placements.

CWLA conducted a two-day on-site review of the operations and programming of eight of the nineteen residential camps that comprise the Residential Treatment Services Bureau Camp Program for juvenile offenders in the County of Los Angeles. The CWLA Review Team observed operations and programming, conducted unscheduled interviews of administrative and managerial staff and camp wards, assessed treatment and service provisions, and formulated generalized findings and recommendations. Subsequent to its site visit, CWLA also reviewed several documents and reports relating to the camps' operation.

The review was not designed as a rigorous examination or comprehensive audit of the RTSB Camp Program. The CWLA Review Team strongly suggests that a more comprehensive set of recommendations, utilizing best available operational, staffing, training, and programmatic practices could be more prescriptively provided upon a more

rigorous examination/audit of the Camp Program. It is within this context that the following summary of observations and findings are offered. The full report of the Camp Review can be found in Appendix K.

The RTSB *Performance Counts!* reports articulate the goals of the Camps program and identify results sought from ward participants in the residential placements. According to these RTSB reports, the goal is to "aid in reducing the incidence and impact of crime in the community by:

1.   Providing a residential experience that introduces effective life skills to each ward,

2.   Reunifying the minor and family, and

3.   Assisting the minor in achieving a productive, crime-free life."

The desired result is described as "probation youth meet their obligations to the juvenile court and learn the life skills necessary to successfully reunite with their families and reintegrate into the community."

Camp Staffing and Scheduling
The CWLA Review Team believes that current staffing levels are inadequate to achieve the stated goals of the RTSB Camp Program and they are currently organized to support a long-standing method of scheduling staff. The majority of camp staff, responsible for coordinating the treatment and management of camp wards, maintain a "straight 56 hour schedule" in which staff spend 2-eight hour periods sleeping within the camps during their 2 ½ day shift. This method of scheduling staff demonstrates minimal regard for continuity and coordination of treatment services. The staffing and scheduling undermines the creation of an integrated environment in which the critical components (i.e., treatment services, education, re-integration planning) work cooperatively to coordinate the wards' placement goals. This condition adversely impacts the opportunity for improved outcomes for camp wards upon their release and reintegration into their home community.

Training of Camp Staff
There is a significant deficiency with regard to training of RTSB Camp staff. Ongoing training opportunities subsequent to assumption of duties were not specified during the course of the 2 day review and there was an absence of an organized training program for continuing staff development. While CWLA was able to review a Departmental staff training curriculum which included a unit for the handling of assaultive ward behavior and use of restraint techniques, there was universal absence of recall by camp staff regarding restraint/verbal de-escalation training received prior to their assumption of duties and there was no indication of any requirement for recertification in restraint or de-escalation skills. The absence of required, ongoing participation in training and uniform adoption and enforcement of restraint and de-escalation techniques can increase the risk for abuse and undermines the effective and consistent operations of the camps.   The

leadership staff demonstrated limited national perspectives on improved practices and treatment approaches that could be replicable within their camp environment.

Management of Education Program
The management of the camp operations provides for "300 minutes of education" within the daily routine. There is evidence of an overall lack of coordination with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) that included timely and complete transfer of records and manuscripts. This situation adversely impacts the coordination of academic records and plans. These failures led to disconnected education work plans for camp wards. The Review Team also observed the existence of a "handoff mentality" between educators and DPO staff which tends to undermine the opportunity to create a seamless, cooperative effort that connects the educational component to the overall placement experience and goals.

Treatment Environment
The County of Los Angeles RTSB Camp Program is providing an adequate response to the need for an intermediate sanction alternative to probation in the community or incarceration in the California Youth Authority (CYA). However, it is apparent to this Review Team that the Camp Program is not providing an integrated treatment environment that is sufficiently contributing to the goals of the RTSB Camp Program, which include: providing a residential experience that introduces effective life skills to each ward, reunifying the minor and family, and assisting the minor in achieving a productive, crime free life.

Use of Camp Placement
It appears that in Los Angeles there is a greater reliance on out-of-home placement, including the camps, than in other California counties. Based on 2003 data provided by the California Department of Justice, Criminal Justice Statistics Center, Los Angeles County places 49% of youth at disposition in all non-home placements compared to 40% by other California counties. The camps are used extensively for probation violations. The Department reports that 34.1% of camp placements in 2004 were for violations of probation.

Cost Effectiveness
Improved client outcomes in community supervision and in the camps may lead to not only better client outcomes overall but also to more cost effective outcomes. As noted in the recommendations below, it is important that the Department determine the best use of the camps, for which types of offenders, for what length of time, etc. This will be critical information for the Department to determine the cost effectiveness of the camp program as compared to best practices models such as Functional Family Therapy (FFT). The monthly cost for a camp resident is $3706 per youth; FFT is reportedly $2140 total per youth in Washington State (Aos, 2001). The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) has developed the best model for determining the cost effectiveness of juvenile justice programs. Their cost effectiveness data, however, is based on their system costs and the perspective of a Washington state taxpayer. The model could be replicated to

reflect the California and Los Angeles contextual factors to help make decisions about how juvenile justice dollars are spent.

RECOMMENDATION #23: Conduct a comprehensive examination of the camps program utilizing the best available operational, staffing, training, educational, and programmatic practices to determine how policy, program, and practice could be changed to meet desired goals of the RTSB Camp Program.

RECOMMENDATION #24: Initiate a comprehensive evaluation of the camp's effectiveness in terms of client outcomes to determine what is the best use of the camps, for which types of offenders, for what length of time, etc. This could be accomplished in part through the development of a database accompanying the use of the new screening form to be used by the department for placement in the camps, suitable placement, and CYA.

RECOMMENDATION #25: Consider the development of programming that utilizes intensive non-residential and community-based services, less reliance on long-term placements and greater use of a shorter-term residential placement combined with intensive in-home services for both the youth and his/her family.

III. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND CLIENT OUTCOMES

The achievement of successful client outcomes is the business of the Probation Department. It is part of what is reflected in its mission and vision statements and it also what the public expects from the Probation Department. The achievement of successful outcomes depends on, first, a careful identification of what outcomes are sought, second, an examination and address of the factors that affect achievement, and third, the development of a measurement system to document achievement. The importance of the third item, or performance measurement, cannot be overstated because often what gets measured is what people value and where they focus their efforts.


A. Department Practice Regarding Client Outcomes

FINDING: The Department has some evidence of a focus on client outcomes in its practice, but a limited review of juvenile cases suggests that the achievement of client outcomes does not drive the case activity.

Key stakeholders have criticized the Department for its lack of focus on what works for juveniles to direct the activity and goal setting for juveniles. They remark that the JJCPA has forced an increased focus on outcomes, but state that this has not translated to the field. Community-based organizations and group home providers state that there is a lack of clarity from the Department regarding its expectations as to the client outcomes to be achieved by the contractors.

Seventy-three percent (73%) of juvenile probation employees responding to the survey agree or strongly agree with the statement that probation officers are knowledgeable about identifying client outcomes for probationers. Only 55% of the adult probation employees agree or strongly agree with the same statement.

The limited review of juvenile cases illustrates some Department practice related to identification and achievement of client outcomes. As shown in the following chart, juvenile probation officers identified one or more outcomes during the investigation process in only 40 (54%) of the 74 cases reviewed.
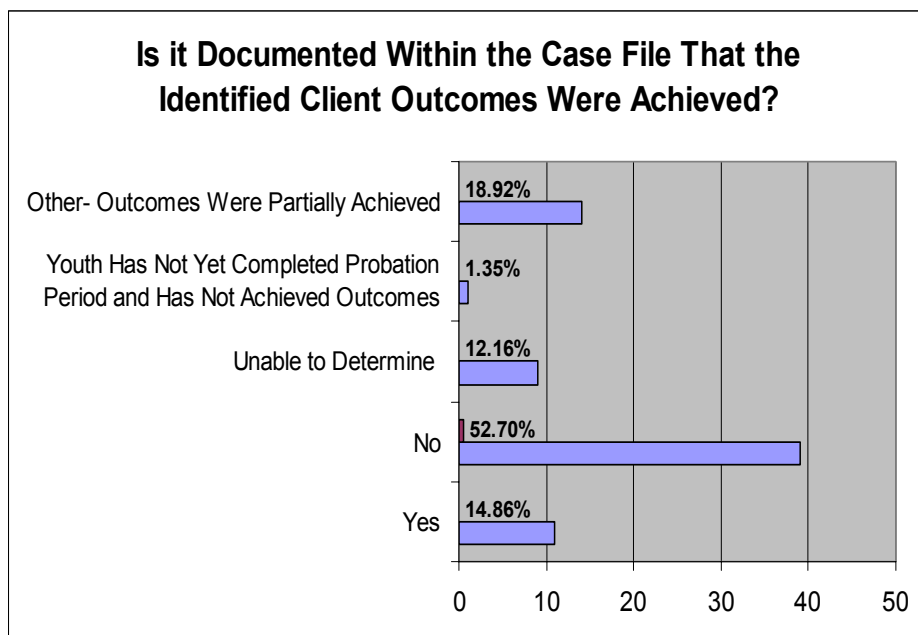
Were Client Outcomes Identified and Documented During the Investigation Process?

Unable to determine
11%

No
35%

Yes
54%
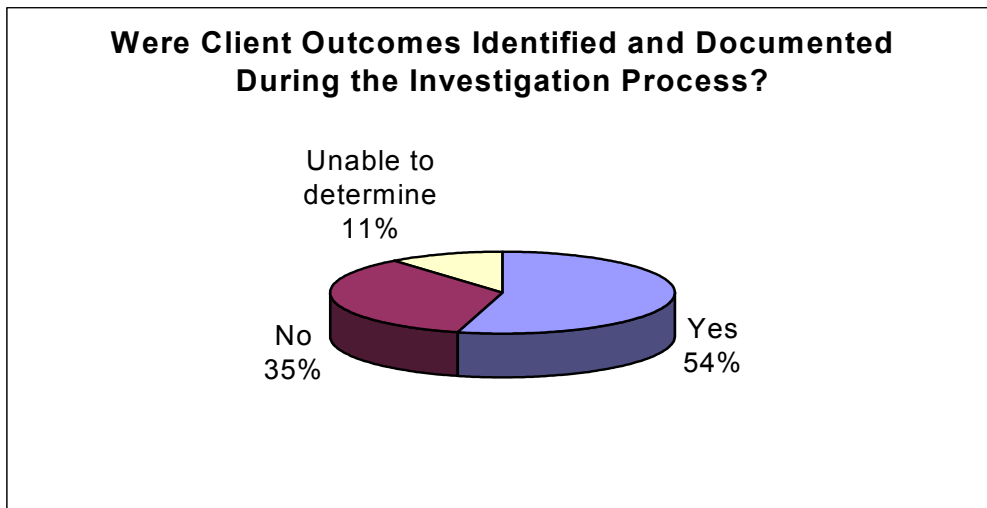
However, as shown below, one or more client outcomes were identified in the initial case plan in (73%) out of the 74 cases reviewed.

Were Client Outcomes Identified During the Initial Case Plan?

Unable to determine
9%

No
18%

Yes
73%
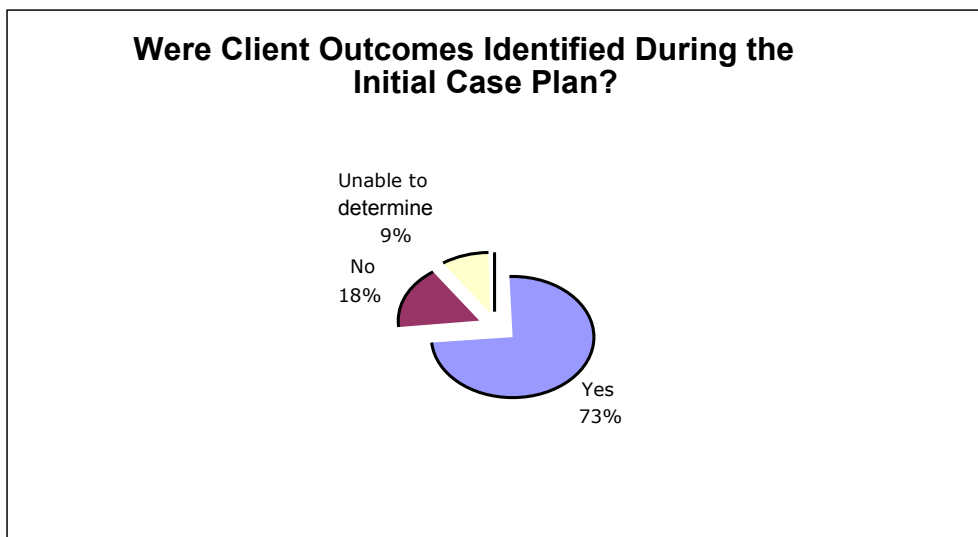
The following table shows which client outcomes were identified in the initial case plan in the 54 cases reviewed that documented client outcomes.

	17. Client Outcomes Identified in the Initial Case Plan (Check all that apply)	#	%
1	Reduction in Violence and Criminal Activity	48	64.86%
2	Improvement in Mental Health	2	2.70%
3	Reduction in Substance Abuse	15	20.27%
4	Increased Vocational Services	0	0.00%
5	Improved Attitudes Toward Self, Family, School, and Work	7	9.46%
6	Improved School Attendance And Performance	42	56.76%
7	Reduced Gang Activity	4	5.41%
8	Improved Family and Peer Relationships	29	39.19%
9	Increased Socialization Skills	1	1.35%
10	Increased Mentoring Relationships	1	1.35%
11	Increased Opportunities for Leadership and Community Involvement	3	4.05%
12	Unable to Determine	4	5.41%
13	No Client Outcomes Were Identified and Documented	13	17.57%
14	Other	15	20.27%
	Total Cases Reviewed with Client Outcomes Identified in the Case Plan	54	100.00%

Only 11 of the 74 cases reviewed (15%) contained documentation that identified client outcomes were achieved, and an additional 14 cases (19%) included documentation that identified client outcomes were partially achieved.

Is it Documented Within the Case File That the Identified Client Outcomes Were Achieved?

Category	Value
Other- Outcomes Were Partially Achieved	18.92%
Youth Has Not Yet Completed Probation Period and Has Not Achieved Outcomes	1.35%
Unable to Determine	12.16%
No	52.70%
Yes	14.86%

FINDING: The Department routinely measures processes and activities but has little data on client outcomes.

The Department measures a number of work processes and a few outcomes related to recidivism and school attendance and graduation/GED. These measures are reported in the Departments edition of *Performance Counts!*, a standardized reporting mechanism for departments throughout the County. This report focuses primarily on work processes such as timely referrals, completion of assessments, timely submission of court reports, and probation officer contacts. It sets benchmarks, or targets for performance, for each year and shows that the Department is performing well in many areas in relation to its targets. Another report, *Performance Based Outcomes,* with similar but not exactly the same measures is produced monthly listing the performance of each area office. The measures also focus on work processes, (court reports and timely performance of tasks) and give some attention to recidivism and school enrollment. These measures are, arguably, all important in some way either because they address particular mandates, or in some way are related to desired client outcomes. The challenge for the Department is to make clear to its staff and the public what it really values in terms of outcomes that make a difference in terms of the future success of the probationers and public safety for the community.

B. Determining Departmental Client Outcomes

FINDING: The department could change its culture and improve outcomes for probationers by giving a strong focus to the measurement of client outcomes. And, by publicizing what it values vis-à-vis client outcomes, the performance of probation officers would become more focused on the achievement of those outcomes in addition to the successful performance of work processes.

CWLA met with most of the Department's Executive Leadership Team and Special Assistants to generate a list of desired client outcomes as well as barriers and opportunities to achieve them. Following is the list of desired outcomes along with lists of factors that affect the achievement of those outcomes.

Client Outcomes
- Not to re-offend (less serious, less frequent, not to go to CYA)
- Do well at school
- To become or be employed
- Graduate high school
- Strengthen family functioning – build in protective factors
- Reduce risk factors
- Eliminate drug usage (substance abuse)
- Complete the program
- Minors to learn a trade/attend college to become employed
- Increase interpersonal and social skills
- Skills development – arts, sports, music, etc.

- Improved parenting skills
- Increased caregiver/parent involvement
- Improved mechanisms to deal with anger (new behaviors)
- Not to run away (reduction in runaways)
- To be self sustaining (eliminate welfare dependency)
- To have a decent home
- To have a safe home
- Reduce teen pregnancy
- Decrease involvement with delinquent peers
- Increase involvement with pro-social peers
- Families to acquire and sustain a support system
- Improved mental health (mentally healthy kids) (listing this outcome was controversial because the group believes they have little control over the diagnosis and treatment of mental health problems because they do not have access to data about individual clients)

Factors That Affect the Achievement of These Outcomes
- Budget
- Resources
- Skill level of staff
- Programs that work/effective
- Open/shared dialogue/communications with collaborating agencies
- Stakeholder support/action (example of negative action that affects the achievement of outcomes is putting all the problem kids in one setting for their education)
- Buy-in/interplay with other systems
- Assessed level of intervention (specific to adults)
- Collective ownership of outcomes
- Responsivity/motivation of clients and families

Factors That Affect the Achievement of the Specific Outcome: "Do Well at School"
- Attendance
- Academic skills (foundation, reading, study skills)
- Welcoming school
- Equal access (lack of stigma due to status as probationers)
- Quality of school
- Accurate educational assessment and placement
- Parent involvement
- Family/parental support for education/school
- Kid's self-efficacy
- Qualified teachers
- Peer mentoring, tutoring, homework assistance
- Kid motivation and engagement
- Kid has to feel safe

The listed outcomes fall, for the most part, into the same domains that exist in the LARRC. The selection of a few outcomes corresponding with the LARRC domains would be a good starting point to practically begin benchmarking and measuring the achievement of successful client outcomes.

The factors for achievement of outcomes could also be the subject of new benchmarks. The factors could be used to move programs and practices toward improved performance. This could be done broadly by focusing on programming that works, for example, and setting some new benchmarks for increased use of such programming. Or, the factors under a specific outcome (e.g. school performance) could be turned into benchmarks (e.g. increased attendance or increased parental involvement).

The Balanced and Restorative Justice Project at Florida Atlantic University, the National Center on Juvenile Justice and the American Prosecutor's Research Institute have joined forces on an effort to publicize the work of local juvenile justice systems (see Maloney and Harp, Juvenile and Family Justice Today, Spring, 2004). It is a public report card to stakeholders that allows a jurisdiction to establish local benchmark measures, detect trends, and evaluate the effectiveness of their current efforts. The focus of the report card is on intermediate outcomes rather than "final" outcomes. This allows the Department to assess at case closure the degree to which concrete objectives have been achieved and to compare individual case outcomes and trends over time. Intermediate outcomes are those outcomes that the Department can reasonably measure at case closure. Examples of intermediate outcomes are payment of restitution in full and payment of at least some restitution, completion of community service in full, meeting various conditions of probation, reduction in substance abuse, attending school at case closure, obtaining a GED, expulsion, suspension, or dropout from school while under supervision, and no new offense while under supervision. An important part of the value of this work is the community engagement that it engenders to support the work of the people working in the juvenile justice system.

RECOMMENDATION #26: Reach consensus on the client outcomes that are most valued by the Department to establish a discipline of goal-directed performance measurement within the organization.

RECOMMENDATION #27: Group the client outcomes that are selected by the Department into the categories of accountability, community protection, and the LARRC domains. These outcomes as well as status and placement summary should be documented at case closure; Select a minimum of one valued client outcome for each domain of the LARRC.

RECOMMENDATION #28: Establish measurement and reporting systems based on client outcomes; **w**idely distribute outcome reports within the Department and among stakeholders on a quarterly basis; utilize aggregate outcome information in planning and administrative decision-making.

C. Outcome-Based Contracting With Community-Based Organizations

FINDING: Contracts with group home providers and other community-based organizations do not specify the expected client outcomes.

FINDING: Contract monitoring focuses on availability of service and on processes, rather than on client outcomes.

FINDING: There is no agreement on the respective roles and responsibilities of community-based organizations and the Department in producing client outcomes.

FINDING: The lists of client outcomes developed by the community-based organizations and group home providers have many similarities to the list developed by the senior administrative staff.

Group Home providers and other community-based organizations (CBOs) struggle with what they think should be the relationship between contractors and the Department as to client outcomes. Some state that the expectations regarding outcomes are not clear. Some make it clear that they would like the Department to value them more in terms of their knowledge about what the community needs and what works with kids. They suggest that outcomes need to be more qualitative and that measurement of outcomes should be program-specific. At the same time, they identify a need for a collaborative approach with probation to identify appropriate outcomes that can be applied across the scope of community-based organizations.

CBOs express some reservations about what outcomes they should be responsible for because of factors over which they have no control (e.g. length of stay in group homes, client amenability to change). Some state that the Department should be responsible for all of the client outcomes and the contractors should be responsible for the outcomes according to the agreements in their contracts. They note that the Department should be measured on the success of probation, not just process measures (e.g. timely preparation of court reports). Following is a list of desired client outcomes for the population they serve that was developed by CBOs and group home providers:

- Increase in responsible sexual behavior (decrease risky sexual behavior).
- Not to be arrested, reduce recidivism.
- Not to run away.
- Increased school attendance.
- Improved school performance.
- Decrease in the number of behavioral incidents (e.g. bullying, substance abuse, etc.).
- Decrease in family conflict.
- Increased parent involvement.
- Increase in pro-social interaction with peers and activities.
- Decrease in gang association.
- Independent living skills.

- Reunification with family.
- Health outcomes e.g. immunizations.
- Sobriety – absence of substance abuse.

Contract Monitoring

FINDING: The Department's contracting process is not driven by the achievement of client outcomes.

The Department's contract monitoring unit monitors all contracts for services including GAPP, the general fund dollars that are allocated at the Board's discretion for gang suppression and at-risk youth (approximately 1.5 mil); and the JJCPA funded contracts (approximately 8.3 mil). The Department itself reports that the contracts are not driven by client outcomes. The focus is on activities or delivery of services.

A review of the Department's monitoring reports creates a concern, however, as to what constitutes contract compliance even for delivery of services. A report for a three month period showed 100% compliance for a program that is to provide mentoring in the community and parenting skills development. Yet, the notes in the report include the following:

- "Home visits/community contacts should be clearly documented in the case files."

- "Sign-in sheets should clearly reflect the service provided, time of scheduled services, and the mentor or agency providing services."

- "DPO contacts should be clearly documented."

If the department were to focus its measurement on the achievement of successful outcomes, it would be able to begin the move from purchasing services to purchasing outcomes from its providers. If this effort were to become very public, the culture would change and it would be clear that repeat business with contractors would be based on their ability to deliver specific outcomes for probationers in addition to their ability to deliver services.

Outcome-based contracting has been slowly evolving in the juvenile justice system. The Department can benefit from the experiences of those who have begun to use this practice as well as from the experiences of the child welfare system and the mental health system who have been utilizing performance standards and financial incentives to hold contract providers accountable for both performance and results.

Multnomah County Department of Community Justice has built outcome-based contracting into their collaborations with community-based service providers. This jurisdiction includes client outcomes, process improvement, best practice research and

comprehensive evaluations into their contracts. They are very inclusive and have community collaborators serve on many of their work groups.

RECOMMENDATION #29: Collaborate with group home providers and CBOs to identify the desired client outcomes both by service category and for individual probationers.

RECOMMENDATION #30: Revise the contracting process to include the contractual expectation of selected outcomes; Expand the focus of the contract monitoring unit to monitor client outcomes.

D.   Implementation of Performance-Based Standards in Adult Probation

A review of established standards for adult probation was conducted. The following documents were reviewed:

- Adult Probation and Parole Field Services Performance Based Standards (2002).
- ACA Standards for Adult Probation and Parole Field Services (1998).
- Correctional Services Canada Accreditation Standards (2003).
- ICCA National Correctional Practices Treatment Survey (2002).

The Adult Probation and Parole Field Services (APPFS) Performance Based Standards offer a combination of guiding standards, expected practices and outcome measures to attain a best practice model.   See Appendix L for a complete review of the APPFS Standards, as well as documentation of data currently being collected by the Department, as well as gaps that will need to be addressed in order to initiate the standards process. There are a total of 99 standards and through the review of LA County Probation materials and interviews with Adult Probation staff, it was found that there were only 30 standards currently being tracked and monitored with on-going reports and inter-agency cooperation.

FINDING: Adult Probation collects the data required for many of the APPFS outcome measures; however, it is not being reviewed or analyzed to inform the decision-making process or to improve client outcomes.

FINDING: Data is collected by other Los Angeles County Departments that may generate the reports necessary to meet selected APPFS Standards. The Department reports that it does not receive this information.

FINDING: The total caseload and resources assigned to adult probation are major challenges to implementing changes in operations.

Many of the outcome measures, outlined in the APPFS Performance Standards are being collected by the Los Angeles County Adult Probation Department, but are not reviewed

or utilized as standard reports at this time. The Adult Probation Department reports that the information is available and can be obtained in many instances from existing data as part of their automated entry, though because of lack of resources and manpower collecting and utilizing the data would present major obstacles. There are 12 critical areas that the Los Angeles Adult Probation Department is not analyzing or utilizing to inform the decision making process. These areas include:

- Confiscation of Contraband (1 standard).
- Rule Violations (3 standards).
- Violations of Conditions (1 standard).
- Employment Tracking (1 standard).
- Positive Urinalysis Tests (1 standard).
- Risk/Need Reassessment data (1 standard).
- Victim Data (2 standards).
- Restitution Participation (1 standard).
- Community Service excluding PAWS (1 standard).

The tracking of this data would provide interim measures as to the effectiveness of services. For example, reassessment data, positive urinalysis results, employment figures and rule violations would tell probation officers if their case planning and management had produced any drops in overall risk to re-offend and impact on criminogenic needs. This is important feedback to both the officer and the probationer. Positive feedback would lead to enhancing the pro-social alternatives in place; negative feedback would lead to a change in the case plan and alternative interventions.

The Probation Department reported that a number of other Los Angles County Departments are responsible for collecting and providing reports for a number of the APPFS Standards and that the Probation Department often does not receive information on those items. Twenty-nine of the standards are collected and maintained by Human Resources. Ten of the standards are collected and maintained by Management Services. Two of the standards are collected and maintained by the Safety Officer. A process needs to be put into place where these reports are generated and shared with the field.

Sixteen standards are not being collected at all and would need to be addressed in order to adopt the APPFS Performance Standards and Outcome Measures:

- Data post probation including:
  - o   Recidivism rates (6 standards)
  - o   Employment rates (3 standards)
  - o   Substance abuse treatment rates (1 standard)

- Community polling to assess community knowledge, attitudes and confidence re: Adult Probation (5 standards).
- Victim awareness classes for offenders (1 standard).

The post-probation data is a major gap that will require personnel, technology and system upgrades in order to produce accurate and meaningful reports. Without this data, there is no way to demonstrate the true impact on recidivism and effectiveness of services and interventions.

The following are the major barriers to implementing the APPFS Performance Based Standards:

- Adult Probation reports that their total caseload is approximately 60,000 compared to Juvenile Probation which has approximately 20,000. They report that their staffing is less than that of Juvenile Probation. Their caseloads average 185 which leaves little opportunity for reassessment or regular case management. Reassessment of risk currently only happens for the specialized units (child threat, gangs, family and financial). For the rest of the probation population there is an assessment of outstanding financial obligations 90 days prior to the end of the probation term. Targeted case management also only happens for the specialized cases, which leaves a huge gap for the majority of the probation high and medium risk cases. A number of the standards are dependent upon adequate internal and external resources for manpower and treatment effectives.

- Adult Probation reports no external contracts except electronic monitoring and urinalysis testing. They report that they are at the mercy of community resources to offer services on a sliding fee scale. Due to the lack of contracted services, they perceive that they do not have the ability to target interventions in an evidence-based fashion. The Adult Probation Department reports that their clients are seen as a "lost cause" and therefore do not get the resources needed to impact recidivism. The only programs/services that are currently approved and monitored by the Adult Probation Department are the Domestic Violence Programs. In order to impact recidivism, programs need to be designed following the evidence-based principles and then monitored for fidelity and integrity. Many of the APPFS standards rely upon proper targeted services and interventions.

Positive steps are being taken in adopting the LSI-r and Motivational Interviewing. The LSI-r will provide them with a validated tool that addresses risk, need, responsivity and protective factors and a style of interaction that facilitates change, but staffing, treatment resources and caseloads need to be addressed for these tools to have efficacy.

Once these evidence-based tools and outcome measures are in place, a system for reviewing the data and results need to be established. Only through meaningful feedback and dialogue at all levels of the organization and with the community can change be effected to make quality improvements and impact recidivism for the Adult Probation population of Los Angeles County.

RECOMMENDATION #31: Adopt the Adult Probation and Parole Field Services (APPFS) Performance Based Standards.

RECOMMENDATION #32: Establish measurement and reporting systems that are based on client outcomes and reinforce evidence-based practice.

RECOMMENDATION #33: Share management and client outcome reports between adult probation and other county departments.

RECOMMENDATION #34: Develop a comprehensive action plan to align the eight principles of evidence-based practice with the core components of adult probation. While there are challenges to implementing a comprehensive action plan with the Department, planning is critical to insure that all steps taken by the Department support an overall plan, e.g., assessment, targeted interventions, training.

IV.   INTRA- AND INTER-AGENCY WORK PROCESSES

CWLA analyzed the case management and flow within the Department as well as its linkages with the organizations it interfaces with as cases move through the system. The focus was on juvenile probation although the employee survey results also contain information from the perspective of the adult probation respondents to the survey. CWLA posed questions regarding whether key information was available to staff at critical decision making points in the case and whether staff makes use of decision making tools available to them. It also explored whether there are bottlenecks that decrease the timeliness or effectiveness of services and whether the management information systems effectively support work processes.

A.   Intra-Agency Work Processes

a. <u>Assessment</u>

FINDING: The juvenile probation staff, responding to the employee survey, believe that they have effective assessment tools and use them to identify services, but there are needed improvements in the integration of efforts to carry out assessment, case planning, and delivery of services.

FINDING: Some probation officers report that there are no written criteria for making dispositional recommendations to the court or for making decisions regarding assignment to specialized caseloads though this is not the case at least as pertains to dispositional recommendations.

FINDING: The LARRC is a well designed tool for assessment, case planning and decision-making.

In the key stakeholder interviews, an observation was made that the problem is not the assessment of cases, but rather the follow through within the Department and with community resources. In the case review of juvenile cases, what seemed apparent is that there was a disconnect between the various assessment and case planning documents and

the review generally confirmed the view that once the assessments and referrals are made, the juvenile and his family are on their own to get to the resources.

The juvenile respondents to the employee survey agree or strongly agree with the statements that "effective assessment tools exist for use by the probation officers" (74%) and that "probation officers use assessment tools to identify what services are needed by the probationer" (81%).

There is a considerable difference of opinion as to the statement that "recommendations to the court are based on a decision-making tool that directs the probation officer". Forty-five percent (45%) of the probation officers agree or strongly agree with that statement and 49% percent disagree or strongly disagree with 6% responding that they do not know.

The probation officers who participated in the process mapping exercise conducted by CWLA observed that there are no written criteria for making dispositional recommendations to the court or for decisions as to which juveniles will be assigned to specialized caseloads. In fact, there are criteria for making dispositional recommendations in the Department's Juvenile Manual. It may be that because the manual is so outdated and is not available on line these criteria are not referenced as much as intended.

The institution of the new Los Angeles Risk and Resiliency Checklist (LARRC) is reportedly to assist with at least some of these decisions. The Department describes its intended use for the LARRC as providing 1) an instant picture of the needs of children and families; 2) a tool to determine what level of supervision is indicated (low, medium, medium-high, and high), 3) to aid with the placement decision, and 4) to drive the case plan that will indicate what needs the child has in the community.

The probation officers in the process mapping exercise state that LAARC is a good tool and it will be an improvement, but it takes a long time to complete and it will not necessarily address the disconnect between what occurs in investigation and what occurs in supervision. This statement was made in response to the CWLA consultants' observation that one of the problems apparent in the case review of the current files (which did not contain the LARRC) is that the content of the worksheet, case plan in the pre-plea report, and the salmon case plan (which will be phased out eventually) does not hang together. The juvenile respondents to the employee survey present a mixed perspective on this point. Fifty-five percent (55%) agree or strongly agree with the statement that "the implementation of the LARRC connects the efforts of the investigating and supervising probation officers", 36% disagree or strongly disagree, and 9% respond that they do not know.

The LAARC, as stated previously, is a very well designed tool and the Department should be lauded in its efforts to bring forward a tool that they believe will address many of the important issues in case assessment, planning, and decision-making. The challenge will be to make sure that it is indeed a dynamic instrument that can be used

throughout the case to assist the probation officers and the probationers and their families.

RECOMMENDATION #35: Reinforce the use of the LARRC to assess risk/needs by using it as a foundation to develop individual case plans, and to provide supervision and services to produce improved client outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION #36: Undertake a systematic study to evaluate the implementation of the LAARC as an assessment tool as well as its usefulness for other case management functions.

b. Supervision of Juvenile Probationers

FINDING: Most juvenile employees who responded to the employee survey believe that probationers in specialized caseloads receive an enhanced level of supervision, regular supervision does not allow for an adequate level of supervision, and probationers need more help than they presently receive during their period of probation.

FINDING: The Department struggles to meet the requirements for contact between the probation officer and the probationers and their families. There is some inconsistency between the Department's reported performance measures, employee survey responses, and the information in case file reviews on this issue.

FINDING: There is a lack of continuity in the supervision of cases by probation officers occurring with the transfer of probationers from one status to another, related timeliness of assignment, and multiple transfers during the period of supervision., a condition that probation officers believe impacts the probationer's achievement of positive outcomes.

The quality of handling or supervision of juveniles by the Probation Department was a common topic in the interviews with key stakeholders and discussions with other entities that interface with the probation department. Some believe that regular supervision is weak compared to the specialized caseloads. School-based supervision gets praise, as do contract probation services that are attached to and paid for by specific cities.

Attention has been drawn to the number and slowness of case transfers from one point to another and from one probation officer to another or, expressed another way, the lack of continuity in the handling of probation cases. Concerns have also been raised about whether there is regular contact between the probation officers and the clients. The problems are attributed to various causes including caseload size, funding, failure to follow policy, and lack of technology.

Supervision in Specialized and Contract Caseloads

75% of the juvenile respondents to the survey agree or strongly agree with the statement that "probationers in specialized caseloads receive an enhanced level of supervision

versus the supervision available to those in regular caseloads", 14% disagree or strongly disagree with this statement, and 11% respond that they do not know. A slightly different picture is presented in regard to the contract probation services. Sixty-four percent (64%) of the juvenile respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement that "probation services that are contracted by specific cities result in increased attention to probationers", 16% disagree or strongly disagree, and 20% respond that they do not know.

The probation officers in the process mapping exercise report that the specialized and contract caseloads are supposed to be smaller to provide more individualized attention, but they are increasing in size to a point where this not possible. They state that the school-based caseloads are mixed with a combination of the juveniles on probation and the WIC 236 prevention kids who are referred by the school for at- risk behavior. The school-based probation officers build their own caseloads and struggle with meeting the requests for services for children at the school who are not on probation. Additionally, the contract probation officers have to work with juveniles who are not on probation but are the result of kids and parents asking for help which has increased the size of the caseload.

Contact between Probation Officers and Juvenile Probationers

Only 25% of the juvenile respondents agree or strongly agree with this statement that, "the caseloads in regular supervision allow for an adequate level of supervision

The Department's policy is that the probation officer is to provide an orientation to the juvenile and parents within 30 days of the disposition. The Probation Department's Performance FY '03-'04 year-end percentages showed 19 of their area offices with 100% compliance, 5 other offices with compliance ranging from 96-99%, and CCTP (Community Camp Transition Program) with a compliance rate of 73%. However, the CWLA case review found documentation that the orientation took place within 30 days of the disposition in only 14 (19%) of the 74 cases reviewed.

19. Did the orientation of the juvenile and parents take place within 30 days of the disposition that led to this supervision case?

- Other 1%
- N/A 1%
- Unable to determine 24%
- Yes 19%
- No 55%
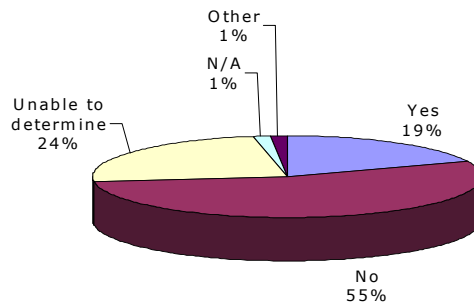
It seems clear that the department struggles with the demands of the caseloads. The probation staff's responses to the open-ended questions in the employee survey as well as the comments of others who interface with the department would suggest that it is difficult to provide the quantity and quality of supervision to juvenile probationers that are desirable. Whether this is primarily a function of caseload size, lack of funding, too much paperwork, or some organizational imperative that does not work to the benefit of the client requires more examination.

One particular issue of concern expressed by many is whether the probation officers are able to maintain the needed amount of contact with the client and his/her family. Ninety-one (91%) percent of the juvenile respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement that "in cases for which it is required, probation officers are in face-to-face contact with the probationers each month, CWLA could find no reports from the Department on this objective. However the case review indicated that the two most recent face to face contacts between the PO and the youth occurred within 30 days of each other in only 26% (19) of the 74 cases reviewed.

21. Were the Two Most Recent Face to Face Contacts Between the Probation Officer and the Youth Within 30 Days of Each Other?

Unable to determine 23%

Yes 26%

No 51%
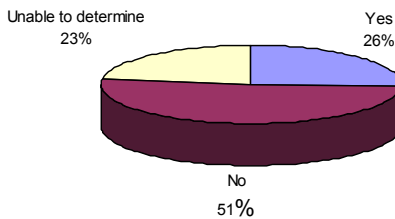
Since the requirement is only that there be monthly contact this may not be an indication that probation officers are out of compliance with the contact requirements. The probation officer may meet with the juvenile at the beginning of one month and the end of the next month, thus going beyond 30 days between visits. But, coupled with the percentage of "unable to determine," and the information in the following chart on contact with parents (also a monthly requirement) it is important that this requirement and corresponding compliance be further examined.

The Department does not currently measure compliance with these contact requirements. "Percentage of cases where contact standards are met" is listed as a measure in its *Performance Counts!* report, but the entry is "TBD." The Department reports that measurement of this requirement will be a part of the program measures when they have their new automated information system, but as one juvenile employee responding to the survey points out, depending on the size of the caseload, meeting this requirement with both juveniles and parents on a monthly basis may not be feasible.

22. During the Last Two Months, How Often Did the Probation Officer Meet With the Parents Face to Face?

Unable to Determine 22%

2 Times 5%

1 Time 7%

No Meetings 66%
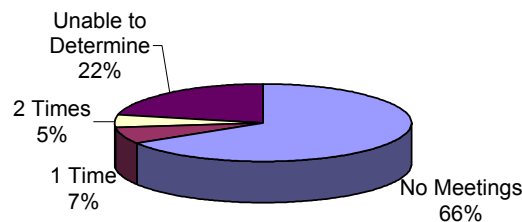
As shown in the preceding chart, in two thirds (66%) of the 74 cases reviewed, the PO had not met with the parents face to face in the two months prior to the case review.

Probation Department staff express some strong views regarding the needs of probationers as well as some better ways of doing business. Ninety-one percent (91%) of the juvenile respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement that "probation officers help assure that probationers receive services to which they have been referred" but, at the same time, 77% agree or strongly agree with the statement that "probationers need more help than they presently receive during their period of probation". They also believe that additional resources are needed to adequately provide for the parent and family support network for probationers (90% percent agree or strongly agree and 7% disagree or strongly disagree).
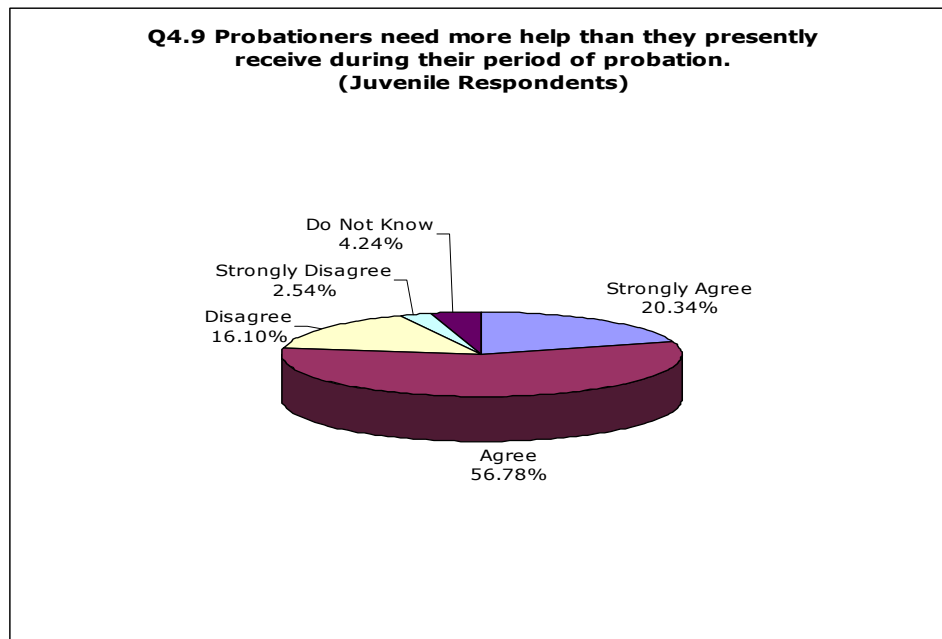
Multiple Case Transfers
The number and frequency of transfers is also of concern. CWLA made the observation in its review of the case notes accompanying the case file review that the cases appeared to be transferred frequently. Community-based organizations comment on this issue as instability in the department, with lots of transfers of cases. Judicial officers also describe this problem as too many transfers in that the DPO is changed every time the order is changed and it is difficult for kids and parents to know who is their DPO. They go on to state that these multiple transfers create 'disconnects' at each phase – placement in camp, return to community, suitable placement to camp, suitable placement to home, etc., but that DPOs are working hard to have a plan set up for kids leaving camps. They believe that these problems are due to a lack of proper technology and organization and that there is a need to examine each transition/transfer point and ensure continuity of supervision and services.

The issues regarding lack of continuity of probation officers are many. The probation officers in the process mapping exercise report that cases may get backed up before investigation, but the major bottleneck is in the transfer to supervision. There may be as
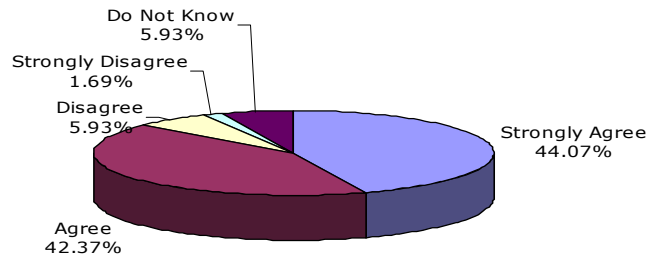
much as a month after kids have been placed on probation before the transfer to supervision takes place, a concerning length of time after the offense occurred and after the ordered consequence. The judicial officers report that it usually takes two months to have a DPO assigned, probably due to resources issues. To address this problem, they will sometimes set an earlier court hearing for 60 or 90 days after disposition because they know that will make it more likely that a DPO will be assigned sooner.

The transfer issue is obviously a concern from the perspective of the probation officers, based not only on their comments in the process mapping exercise, but based on their response in the employee survey. In the process mapping exercise, they talk about the timing issues as described above, but they also highlight another problem with transfer particularly when it is not timely. They state that, in the transfer of cases, often there is misinformation about the juvenile (e.g. not in the listed school, not living at the listed address). The problem is that the probation officers making the transfer don't verify school information; rather, they take the parents word as to the child's enrollment. A further expression of the probation officers' concern about this issue is reflected in the survey responses. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of the juvenile respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement that "the number of transfers within individual case files impacts the probationer's achievement of positive outcomes".
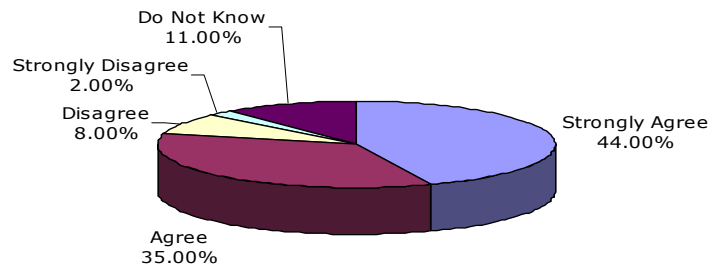
Community-Based Supervision
An important finding from the employee survey relates to the organization of the probation officers to carry out the supervision of probationers. Forty-four percent (44%) of the juvenile respondents strongly agree and 42% agree with the statement that the assignment of all probation officers to smaller geographic areas would result in more effective supervision of probationers while 6% disagree and 2% strongly disagree with this statement. Notably, the response to this statement is similar for adult probation staff. Forty-four percent of the adult respondents strongly agree and 35% agree with the statement while 8% percent disagree, 2% strongly disagree, and 11% respond that they do not know.

Q4.14 The assignment of all probation officers to smaller geographic areas would result in more effective supervision of probationers
(Juvenile Responodents)

Do Not Know
5.93%

Strongly Disagree
1.69%

Disagree
5.93%

Strongly Agree
44.07%

Agree
42.37%

Q4.14 The assignment of all probation officers to smaller geographic areas would result in more effective supervision of probationers
(Adult Respondents)

Do Not Know
11.00%

Strongly Disagree
2.00%

Disagree
8.00%

Strongly Agree
44.00%

Agree
35.00%

RECOMMENDATION #37: Assign probation officers to smaller geographic areas as a strategy to achieve more effective supervision of probationers; coordinate with community-based organizations in defined geographic areas to target the needs of juveniles in that area.

RECOMMENDATION #38: Examine each transition/transfer point and ensure continuity of supervision and services as well as accuracy of information prior to transfer; reduce the number of transfers from one probation officer to another.

RECOMMENDATION #39: Review the accuracy of reports stating that the orientation of minors takes place within 30 days of orientation.

c. Placement

FINDING: Key stakeholders and juvenile probation employees express concerns about whether the Department adequately meets the needs of juveniles who are in placement.
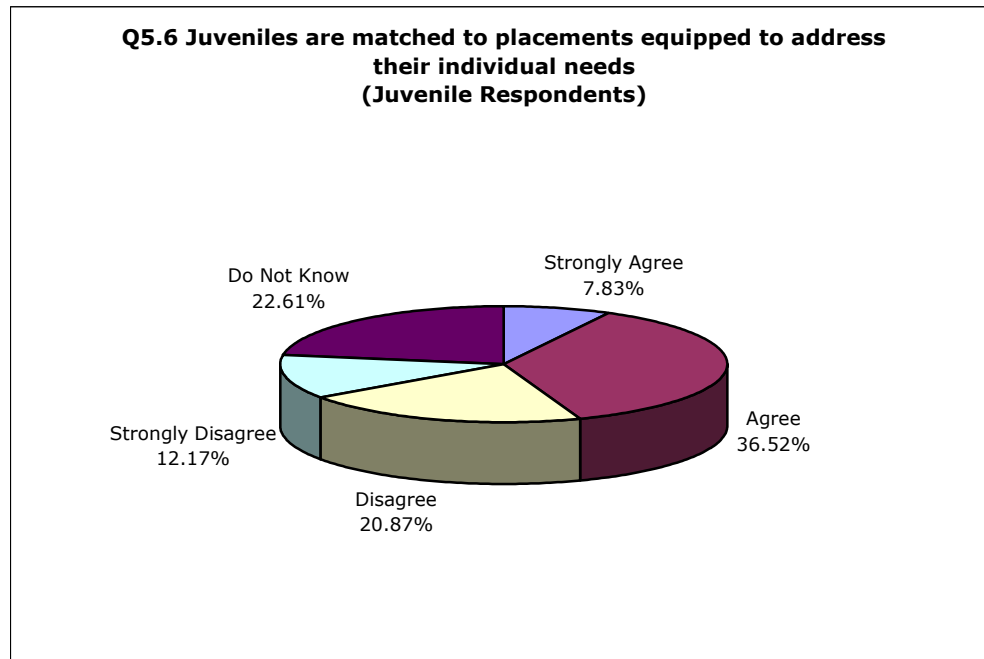
CWLA found notable discussion from several different sources about the assessment and supervision of juveniles in placement. These included key stakeholders, judicial officers, group home providers, and the juvenile probation staff who responded to the employee survey. People report the need for aftercare, a better transition in and out of placement, and more oversight of the children and their needs while in placement.

A review of the Department's Central Placement Resource Control Procedures illustrates that the Department has tools to assess the needs of the juveniles who are to be placed. Stakeholders, however, currently describe a disconnect between the assessment of the youth and the identification of appropriate services as well as lack of teaming among professionals with knowledge about a particular juvenile to make an appropriate referral to placement. They question whether there is an adequate need-based, service provision assessment of youth prior to recommendations for placement now that placement is done through a centralized process. One recommendation is that the Deputy Probation Officer should interview the youth prior to placement, not just the placement staff. Some believe that placement matches are better in the mental health court.

A concern has been raised about the use of juvenile hall to transition youth to appropriate placement. It is believed that the rush to get youth out of juvenile hall in response to the pressure from the U.S. Department of Justice agreement results in some poor suitable placement matches. DMH staff report that they are no longer consulted in the placement process, that they lost a good relationship with probation when probation changed to a centralized placement process.

The juvenile employees who responded to the employee survey share some concerns about placement with these other groups, but not all. Sixty-nine percent agree or strongly agree with the statement that "juveniles have access to aftercare services upon return home to parents." Forty-eight percent (48%) agree or strongly agree with the statement that "juveniles receive adequate support when they transition in and out of placement", 36% disagree or strongly disagree, but it is significant that 16% say they do not know whether this is the case. Only 41% agree or strongly agree with the statement "there is sufficient oversight of juvenile probationers while in placement", 33% disagree or strongly disagree, but again it is significant that 26% say they do not know whether this is

the case. As to the statement that "juveniles are matched to placements equipped to address their individual needs", 44% agree or strongly agree, 33% disagree or strongly disagree, and again, significantly, 23% respond that they do not know.

Q5.6 Juveniles are matched to placements equipped to address their individual needs (Juvenile Respondents)

- Strongly Agree 7.83%
- Agree 36.52%
- Disagree 20.87%
- Strongly Disagree 12.17%
- Do Not Know 22.61%

RECOMMENDATION #40: Undertake a review of the placement process in conjunction with providers to determine the effectiveness of the assessments, placement matches, and supervision of juveniles while in placement.

B.   Inter-Agency Work Processes

FINDING: Employees report that there are good working relationships with other agencies but acknowledge that there is room for improvement.

FINDING: There is strong support among employees for the Department to assist in the identification of prevention and early intervention opportunities with other agencies.

FINDING: Stakeholders report that departmental relationships with community-based organizations are improving but some CBOs identify that there are still significant problems and opportunities for improvement.

CWLA included in its employee survey a section on interagency relationships to obtain the perspectives of Probation staff regarding the Departments relationships with other County Departments and community-based agencies. It also obtained information from the focus groups with a small sample of CBOs and group home providers about their

working relationships with the Probation Department. Further, CWLA met with two County departments who interface regularly with the Probation Department, groups of employees from the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services and the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. The purpose was to explore the working relationships between the Departments and identify issues or concerns about the delivery of probation services.

The findings from the employee survey suggest that there are some good working relationships with the Probation Department, but that there is room for improvement. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of the juvenile respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement that "the Probation Department generally has good working relationships with other county departments."   It is noteworthy, however, that 34% strongly agree and 54% agree with the statement that "the Probation Department would function more effectively if its relationships with other county departments were better."

An important finding on the issue of interagency coordination is in regard to prevention and early intervention. Eighty-six percent (86%) strongly agree or agree with the statement that "the Probation Department should look at data across service delivery systems to assist with the identification of prevention and earlier intervention opportunities."

a. Community-Based Organizations

As to the relationships with community-based organizations, it was expressed in the interviews with key stakeholders that relationships with community-based organizations had improved. Seventy percent (70%) of the juvenile respondents to the employee survey agree or strongly agree with the statement that "the Probation Department's relationships with community-based agencies have improved in the past three years", Noteworthy again, however, is that 85% agree or strongly agree with the statement that "the Probation Department would function more effectively if its relationships with community-based agencies were better."

As described in the methodology section of this report, CWLA invited over 20 community-based organizations and over 20 group home providers, each of whom currently contracts with the Probation Department, to meet with them in two separately scheduled focus group meetings. Neither meeting was well attended so that the findings herein represent the input of only 10 organizations. The participants, however, were from some established organizations and, as the following illustrates, they provided some very strong opinions. These opinions may or may not be representative of the two groups as a whole. The meetings with the community-based organizations including the group home providers produced the following comments on the working relationships with the Probation Department:

Probation Officer Performance Regarding Accessing Services for Their Clients and Attending to the Accompanying Details

- Follow-up of probation officers depends on the probation officers themselves; they start out caring, get disillusioned, and then they don't care anymore--some don't know what their job is, and CBOs have to tell them what the program is.

- PO's have a resistance to CBOs who have programs that work if it is something they have not done before, and if it is more work then they won't do it unless administration tells them to do it.

- The letter of referral and acceptance into program is not always in the file because it is too much trouble (to the PO).

- CBO plays an advocacy role (for the kids with the department regarding access to services); compare a case file to a treatment file on the same kid.

- We do give them (PO's) reports, fax them things, and also ask PO to help when child or parent is not going to treatment, some POs don't want the information, but when a progress report is needed, then there is the frantic call from the PO.

- There used to be more seasoned officers who were more interested in partnership with the community and working together to help kids.

- Officers promote out from the camps and they act more as bailiffs, it is not a culture of sharing and collaboration; the idea is that probation will bring you to the table only if they are in control; collaboration with the department is dictated by the department.

- There are concerns that the probation officers are so busy with paperwork and administrative tasks that they are too busy to handle case issues.

Group Care Contracts Through LA DCFS Not a Good Fit for Probation Kids

- Group home contracts are generated through Los Angeles DCFS – and there is a difference between probation and social service kids – the contracts are weighted toward social service kids; there is a disconnect between the services and requirements of both systems – dependency vs. delinquency kids; heavily weighted toward social service kids so that probation kids are not provided for – i.e., some probation serving agencies need (youth) accountability which is not part of the contract (probation youth are not necessarily treated as probationers).

69

- Lack of parity in terms of addressing the kids, (e.g. bed holds – 3 days for probation kid vs. 1 week for CW kid).

- Provisions in contract do not allow for accountability and removal of youth due to delinquent behaviors/violations of probation – i.e. strong arming, bullying, substance abuse issues, there is a new provision in the contracts that requires a 7 day notice if the home wants a kid removed; this is not practical when a particular child is out of control and is potentially dangerous to the other children, the problem is facility needs to maintain control and law enforcement is not going to be a resource in most instances.

- Disconnect between addressing issues on the front-end in placements; to have a youth removed due to chronic delinquent behavior the determination has to be made at the central placement level instead of PO level (centralized decision-making that disallows for determination at the front-line level).

- Lack of continuity in regard to PO's handling of removals; a good innovation is the establishment of on-site probation officers at the larger placement facilities, but they still do not have authority to remove a minor.

- Performance based contracts – DCFS was the lead in this area; disconnect between DCFS performance based outcomes and needs/outcomes of probation youth (DCFS outcomes do not apply to probation population).

- The Board created a committee – goal to reduce the number of group home beds but DCFS does not connect with probation; group care is not big business for DCFS, but it is for probation.

- It is a problem that DCFS created outcomes for probation – dynamic is potentially detrimental.

- We need to bifurcate the statement of work between probation and DCFS (to recognize the different purposes and needs of these two populations).

- Unrealistic goals secondary to an incompatible model of treatment that is enforced upon probation youth – policy of DCFS that has come out of contract re: reunification provision; example: weekend home passes for youth (to promote reunification) regardless of youth's behavior.

- Overall, incompatibility of provisions and policy of DCFS contract and oversight of probation – unilateral policy implementation that does not allow for discourse and compromise to accommodate the needs of both systems (discussions w/ probation and providers occur quarterly to discuss such conflicts).

- Last year 2004, youth were being released prematurely (from group care) w/out necessarily meeting conditions of probation (e.g. testing positive for drugs and released rather than extension of time); question of whether it was judicial decision v. administrative decision of probation; inconsistent message to youth regarding accountability.

Some Things Work Well

- Strengthened Independent Living services – most programs (in this area of service) that are available to DCFS kids are (also) available to probation youth, i.e. ILP, transitional housing and access to (related) services.

How well the Probation Department assesses the needs of juveniles and matches them to programs and services…

- Kids are supposed to come to you (the provider) with an assessment and case plan and CBO should not have to develop an assessment and case plan; not sure they are qualified. If CBO identifies some other needs probation officer has to agree if they are to become part of the case plan.

- Probation officer refers out to whomever and then they (believe their job is) done.

- The Department is not good at isolating programming so that it works in the context of the community

- Criteria for referral are not clearly defined for either POs or CBOs.

- There is no connection to community on transition- we've been working on this for years but it is still a problem.

- There is a disconnect between assessment of youth and identification and connection w/ appropriate services/program/placement; and a lack of teaming to make appropriate referral for placement.

- Youth were (at one time) placed by the PO, but now placement is done through central placement; question of review of need-based, service-provision assessment of youth prior to placement and recommendation; (e.g. a youth was removed from a particular facility and the same youth is the subject of a packet referring him to the same facility 3 days later).

- Use of ZIPP placement staff to assess needs and identify suitable placement match was successful – however, ZIPP was ceased.

- Inconsistency with placement team causes lack of continuity in placement assessment and appropriate planning for probation youth.

- Turn-over of placement staff/department is a problem; staff become proficient and then are moved on.

- RCL is used to label kids instead of identifying kids' needs and matching them to placement.

- We need to go back to a system of matching kids to placements.

RECOMMENDATION #41: Conduct forums throughout the County with community-based organizations to determine ways in which the Department and the community-based organizations can address any long-standing problems with their working relationships; lay the foundation for working with them in stronger partnership

RECOMMENDATION #42: Examine the issues as to whether the group care contracts generated by DCFS are a poor fit for probation and consider the development of a contracting process that better meets the needs of juvenile probationers.

RECOMMENDATION #43: Establish an evaluation design and data collection system to measure how well the Probation Department assesses the needs of juveniles and matches them to programs and services.

b. Department of Children and Family Services

FINDING: There are needed areas for improvement in the working relationship with the Department of Children and Family Services, particularly related to the participation of the probation staff, training, and information sharing in the operations of three programs areas (i.e., START, WRAPAROUND, moving youth between agencies and the 241.1 process) and moving youth between agencies.

FINDING: The protocol for designating a dual status child is in the developmental stages.

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of juvenile respondents to the employee survey agree or strongly agree with the statement that the Probation Department's relationship with the Department of Children and Family Services is good, 17% disagree or strongly disagree, and 16% respond that they do not know. However, 42% strongly agree and 44% agree with the statement that the interface between DCFS and Probation around moving kids from DCFS to Probation needs improvement, 3% disagree and 2% strongly disagree with this statement, and 9% respond that they do not know.

With the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), CWLA did a formal process mapping exercise related to three program areas in which the DCFS and

Probation work together; the START program, Wraparound, and the 241.1 process (crossover kids).

START

The START (Start Taking Action Responsibly Today) program is an early intervention program for children at risk of penetrating further into the delinquency system. The participants in the process mapping exercise reported the following:

- DCFS is the lead agency; there is supposed to be joint supervision and a strong protocol exists for this collaboration, but it doesn't happen.

- The case carrying Deputy Probation Officer does not see the juvenile while the juvenile is in the START unit, checks in with START DPO and other personnel before the court hearing, but has a negative view and does not fully use the information.

- As the case heats up (e.g. moving children from 654 informal to 725(a) court-ordered supervision) there is a struggle between DCFS and Probation.

- Case carrying probation officer needs to be more involved because they have more authority to recommend action while the START DPO can only advise.

- Kids in START don't believe they are on any kind of serious probation because the probation officer does not hold them accountable.

- START unit will not pay for drug treatment and the Dept of Mental Health does not want to recommend substance abuse treatment; it is voluntary and DMH won't recommend involuntary.

- When the kid is done with probation and the parent does not want the kid, instead of using the 241.1 process, probation calls the help line.

The participants made the following recommendations:

- The START probation officer should be the primary probation officer; a group of probation officers with full authority should be assigned to the START unit.

- The cases should go through the 241.1 process, a mandatory START referral.

- The deputy probation officer should be paid by IV-E.

- The DPO should hold the child accountable when the child does not go to school.

WRAPAROUND is a service collaboration involving the Departments of Children and Family Services, Mental Health, and Probation. When DCFS worked on the process map for this program they reported the following:

- The disconnect in the work processes comes with Probation having only 3 people to cover the whole county – lost the System of Care funding in June of 2004.

- When probation is not at the table, it is hard to impose conditions of probation.

- Three-fourths of the cases are DCFS cases and the difference with WRAPAROUND is that the family is involved.

- The probation officer is not at the table for WRAPAROUND; DCFS is carrying the load for probation.

There were no recommendations reported for this program, but the obvious problem was the lack of participation on the part of the Probation Department in the program. Since this activity took place, the Department of Children and Family Services has come forward with funding for the probation officers to work in this program.

241.1 Process

The 241.1 process is an effort to address those children who may be subject to the jurisdiction of both the dependency and delinquency courts. Until the passage of California Assembly Bill 129 last year there were no provisions to allow for the designation of a child as a dual status child and a protocol to do so now is still in the development stages. Nonetheless, in Los Angeles County, the Probation Department and the Department of Children and Family Services have worked diligently together for a number of years to address the needs of these crossover children. Following is the report from DCFS staff participating in the mapping exercise about what could be improved in their working relationship with probation in the 241.1 process:

- There is a disconnect (an information-sharing problem) between the Camp probation officer, with the field probation officer, with the START probation officer.

- There are some training needs that should be addressed: DCFS workers need to know what 725a, 790, 707b, is etc; delinquency hearing officers need training to better understand the issues and dual jurisdiction population.

- Probation needs a good information system that is updated.

- Team decision-family group decision-making needs to be part of the process for probation.

- In the 241.1 Unit itself, the working relationship between DCFS and Probation is good.

RECOMMENDATION #44: Provide a forum to address the specific recommendations that DCFS made to improve the START program and the 241.1 process through improvements in the practices and participation of the Probation Department.

RECOMMENDATION #45: Participate more fully in the WRAPAROUND service collaboration. Funding provided by the DCFS will facilitate this participation.

RECOMMENDATION #46: Complete and implement the protocol for designating dual status youth.

c. The Department of Mental Health

FINDING: There are issues to be addressed in the working relationships with and the practices of the Probation Department regarding continuity of services, appropriate supervision, matching juveniles to services, and information sharing.

The screening of youth with mental health problems and the subsequent delivery of treatment services requires interagency collaboration and an integrated approach to working with these youth to generate successful client outcomes. CWLA conducted an interview with a group of employees from the Department of Mental Health. The discussion focused on three areas of interaction with the Probation Department: Screening at the Juvenile Halls, Treatment Services at the Juvenile Halls, and mental health services at the Camps. The group identified a number of issues or concerns which are included in this section.

The following concerns were identified during the group interview:

Screening at Juvenile Halls

- There is a struggle with tracking kids, maintaining a correct list of the juveniles present at the halls; this problem is attributed to the fact that the person in charge of this function has a number of other duties and it is reported that it is partly a technology problem.

- There is a struggle between Probation and DMH and their differing interpretation of the levels of supervision as determined by the screening instrument; a difference exists between what DMH expects from the levels

and what probation is able to provide in terms of staffing levels (e.g. level 3 juveniles need a very close watch but staffing does not allow).

Treatment Services at Juvenile Halls

- The interface between DMH and Probation employees varies depending on the particular personnel.

- Referrals to the Care Unit involve close contact between the DPO and the DMH staff.

- DMH believes they lost a good relationship with Probation when Probation moved to a centralized system of placement; Probation no longer consults with DMH; if DMH has a concern about a particular juvenile, it might not be heard; concern that the result is bad matches; used to be more communication between the two entities.

- Push to get kids out of the hall drives the process, but there also are not enough placements for difficult kids.

- Recommend that for any juvenile being placed there needs to be a consent obtained so that Probation can get information from DMH to help with placement.

- Improved technology would help but accountability for what is supposed to be done is also needed.

- Concern about a break in treatment services as the juvenile moves from Juvenile Hall to field; trying to connect juveniles to services before they get a PO (which will likely take 30 days); DMH discharge planner refers to services.

- Need more DMH staff to follow kids out of the Hall into community-based treatment, not just to provide information, but to "hand hold;" also need MH staff at the Court to get the consents signed and make the linkages to treatment services.

- There is a breakdown in information in that the chart does not follow the child; kids come back to the Hall without the information from the last time they were there.

- IDC is supposed to provide information to the Court, but the information does not get to the investigating officer; IDC is also supposed to notify DMH of high profile kids or kids with a positive entry screen, but this information is not consistently getting to DMH.

76

- One DMH staff person recommended that the DOC model for adults of a pre-assessment center would be a good model also for juveniles.

Camps

- There has been some criticism of DMH from Probation in that DMH repeats its screening at the camps-DMH states that the shelf life of the screening instrument (MAYSI 2) is short making it very appropriate to re-screen a juvenile who is moving from one setting to another; they also point out that the screening at the camps may be more reliable (accurate) because kids may be more volatile while at the hall.

- Staff at the Kirby Center also express concern about the centralized placement process; used to do their own placements but DMH management noted that discontinuation of this process is positive because it represented a conflict of interest for clinical staff.

- There is a concern about the discontinuity of services when children go back into the community from camp.

- Caseloads-170 kids on psychotropic drugs at Challenger.

- Recommend that there be more continuity of services at each of the camps would help address the problem of kids trying to avoid treatment plans because they want to avoid a particular camp or want to go to a particular camp (e.g. kids who don't want to be in Lancaster where Challenger is will refuse medication).

- Recommend more use of diversion - before juvenile hall and diversion from the camps.

The Department and DMH are aware of these issues and have taken a significant first step to resolve them. They are participating together in a National Policy Academy on "Improving Services for Youth with Mental Health and Co-Occurring Substance Abuse Disorders Involved in the Juvenile Justice System." Los Angeles County was selected as a site for this effort by the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice. This is an effort to further the development of evidence-based practices in mental health and substance abuse to improve services for these youth. The Los Angeles team will identify services and gaps in services in its jurisdiction and develop a set of goals and objectives for their work with the Policy Academy over the coming months.

RECOMMENDATION #47: Resolve the differences in interpretation regarding the levels of supervision at the Juvenile Halls.

RECOMMENDATION #48: Examine the continuity of treatment services as juveniles move from one point to another in the probation system; identify methods to address the problems with interruptions of treatment and sharing of information.

RECOMMENDATION #49: Investigate the charge that juveniles avoid needed medication so that they can go to a camp of their choice; determine what implications this has for the provision of treatment services at the camps.

RECOMMENDATION #50: Utilize all of the information and issues identified by the mental health staff to collaboratively identify issues and gaps in services in preparation for participation in the National Policy Academy and in other interagency meetings for the planning and evaluation of services.

APPENDIX A
PROGRAM AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Program Planning and Implementation

RECOMMENDATION #1: Develop a multi-year, comprehensive action plan, including the principles for implementing evidence-based practices, a strong statement of desired client outcomes, and a system of performance measurement that reinforces the use of evidence-based practices and the achievement of desired client outcomes. Publicize the plan or roadmap, engage the stakeholders, line staff and community in the planning process, its implementation, and progress so that others join forces with the Department and become invested in its success. The planning process should be a big effort carried out over several weeks or months with clear benchmarks and institutionalized review mechanisms.

RECOMMENDATION #2: Solicit feedback from all stakeholders regularly, including probationers and their families, contracted providers and community resources to guide future planning, to assess service excellence, and to evaluate program efforts.

RECOMMENDATION #3: Provide for the evaluation of existing programs and new initiatives (e.g. the Los Angeles Risk and Resiliency Checklist [LARRC] and the new screening unit to handle out-of-home placements) to determine whether practices result in the desired outcomes and ensure that the programs and initiatives are implemented as intended.

RECOMMENDATION #4: Update the Juvenile Manual from the 1991 edition. When a rewrite occurs, it should include a method for inserting replacement policies (presently described in the Department's directives) into the manual so that it would continually be updated; make the manual available on-line

RECOMMENDATION #5: Adopt and implement the use of a standardized risk/needs assessment (the Level of Services Inventory-revised [LSI-r] is currently under Departmental consideration) that not only identifies risk level, but also criminogenic needs and protective factors and norm it to the LA County probation population. Adopt and implement the use of a responsivity tool (identifies what strategies are the most effective to address barriers to achieving success for particular types of clients).

RECOMMENDATION #6: Develop and implement policy that addresses referral of clients for services based on criminogenic needs as well as court ordered conditions, as well as an assessment to measure motivation in the criminogenic need areas.

RECOMMENDATION #7: Develop relevant policy and implement case management strategies based on offender risk reduction (risk, need, responsivity, protective factors, motivational interviewing, strength based, skill train with directed practice, positive reinforcement, relapse prevention, community supports).

RECOMMENDATION #8: Put training and QA systems in place to ensure that court reports focus on issues such as providing services based on risk, criminogenic needs and responsivity.

RECOMMENDATION #9: Determine ideal workload measures; evaluate caseloads and resources in terms of best practices nationally and, more importantly, in terms of what is required in caseload size and resource allocation to achieve the overall goals of the Department and publicly valued outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION #10: Conduct an analysis of caseload size for the varying levels of supervision, contact, and other requirements for case supervision; articulate what are the realistic requirements, and publish those requirements along with measures of compliance.

RECOMMENDATION #11: Set up a database that clearly documents the resources needed for each case, whether a referral is made to those services, whether or not the services were provided, and, if not provided, was it because they were not available. This data collection effort will allow for a resource inventory to be made regularly to identify gaps in service/resources for planning new program development within the Department and/or in collaboration with community-based organizations.

RECOMMENDATION #12: Develop an electronic database of community-based organizations available to provide services to adult and juvenile probationers. In addition to the characteristics of the organizations, include the capability to track the use of the organizations and their effectiveness. Use the information along with the resource inventory contemplated in the recommendation above to continuously identify need/gaps in community-based resources.

RECOMMENDATION #13: Develop formalized criteria and a process for utilization of community resources. Resources should be selected that reflect evidence-based practices and meet the philosophy of the department. Resources that utilize strategies that have not been found effective for the probation population, and more specifically with either juveniles or adults, and do not meet the philosophy of the department should not be utilized.

RECOMMENDATION #14: Develop a model for collaboration between the Department and community-based organizations in defined geographic areas to target the needs of juveniles in that area, develop evidence-based programming, jointly deliver services, and evaluate outcomes.

Best Practices and Benchmarking

RECOMMENDATION #15: Incorporate some reference in its overall mission or policy statements to its intention to follow "best practice" in the delinquency prevention and intervention, and ensure that all programming efforts are evidence-based.

RECOMMENDATION #16: Undertake a systematic study to identify which of the Department's programs work best for particular types of youth, as categorized by LARRC, and turn that information into useful guidance for placement and field staff.

RECOMMENDATION #17: Develop staff responsible for designing, planning or contracting for programs and services to become expert in evidence-based practice and the identification of programs and programming methods that do and do not work.

RECOMMENDATION #18: Develop a comprehensive action plan to align the eight principles for implementing evidence-based practice with the core elements of the Department's programs.

RECOMMENDATION #19: Coordinate with community-based organizations in defined geographic areas when developing evidence-based practices to respond to the needs of juveniles in that area.

RECOMMENDATION #20: Develop more capacity for placements of additional youth in programs providing certified versions of Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Multisystemic Therapy (MST) and Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC), the three proven Blueprints models that are potentially cost-effective alternatives for some youths now being placed in camps or group homes.

RECOMMENDATION #21: Hire or contract with an individual or individuals who are sufficiently trained in evaluation methods to design and implement evaluations of departmental programs.

RECOMMENDATION #22: Develop and implement a comprehensive staff training program to support evidence-based practices throughout the Department.

RECOMMENDATION #23: Conduct a comprehensive examination of the camps program utilizing the best available operational, staffing, training, educational, and programmatic practices to determine how policy, program, and practice could be changed to meet desired goals of the RTSB Camp Program.

RECOMMENDATION #24: Initiate a comprehensive evaluation of the camp's effectiveness in terms of client outcomes to determine what is the best use of the camps, for which types of offenders, for what length of time, etc. This could be accomplished in part through the development of a database accompanying the use of the new screening form to be used by the department for placement in the camps, suitable placement, and CYA.

RECOMMENDATION #25: Consider the development of programming that utilizes intensive non-residential and community-based services, less reliance on long-term placements and greater use of a shorter-term residential placement combined with intensive in-home services for both the youth and his/her family.

Performance Measurement and Client Outcomes

RECOMMENDATION #26: Reach consensus on the client outcomes that are most valued by the Department to establish a discipline of goal-directed performance measurement within the organization.

RECOMMENDATION #27: Group the client outcomes that are selected by the Department into the categories of accountability, community protection, and the LARRC domains. These outcomes as well as status and placement summary should be documented at case closure; Select a minimum of one valued client outcome for each domain of the LARRC.

RECOMMENDATION #28: Establish measurement and reporting systems based on client outcomes; widely distribute outcome reports within the Department and among stakeholders on a quarterly basis; utilize aggregate outcome information in planning and administrative decision-making.

RECOMMENDATION #29: Collaborate with group home providers and CBOs to identify the desired client outcomes both by service category and for individual probationers.

RECOMMENDATION #30: Revise the contracting process to include the contractual expectation of selected outcomes; Expand the focus of the contract monitoring unit to monitor client outcomes

RECOMMENDATION #31: Adopt the Adult Probation and Parole Field Services (APPFS) Performance Based Standards.

RECOMMENDATION #32: Establish measurement and reporting systems that are based on client outcomes and reinforce evidence-based practice.

RECOMMENDATION #33: Share management and client outcome reports between adult probation and other county departments.

RECOMMENDATION #34: Develop a comprehensive action plan to align the eight principles of evidence-based practice with the core components of adult probation. While there are challenges to implementing a comprehensive action plan with the Department, planning is critical to insure that all steps taken by the Department support an overall plan, e.g., assessment, targeted interventions, training.

Intra- and Inter-Agency Work Processes

Intra-agency

RECOMMENDATION #35: Reinforce the use of the LARRC to assess risk/needs by using it as a foundation to develop individual case plans and to provide supervision and services to produce improved client outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION #36: Undertake a systematic study to evaluate the implementation of the LAARC as an assessment tool as well as its usefulness for other case management functions.

RECOMMENDATION #37: Assign probation officers to smaller geographic areas as a strategy to achieve more effective supervision of probationers; coordinate with community-based organizations in defined geographic areas to target the needs of juveniles in that area.

RECOMMENDATION #38: Examine each transition/transfer point and ensure continuity of supervision and services as well as accuracy of information prior to transfer; reduce the number of transfers from one probation officer to another.

RECOMMENDATION #39: Review the accuracy of reports stating that the orientation of minors takes place within 30 days of orientation.

RECOMMENDATION #40: Undertake a review of the placement process in conjunction with providers to determine the effectiveness of the assessments, placement matches, and supervision of juveniles while in placement.

Inter-agency

RECOMMENDATION #41: Conduct forums throughout the County with community-based organizations to determine ways in which the Department and the community-based organizations can address any long-standing problems with their working relationships; lay the foundation for working with them in stronger partnership

RECOMMENDATION #42: Examine the issues as to whether the group care contracts generated by DCFS are a poor fit for probation and consider the development of a contracting process that better meets the needs of juvenile probationers.

RECOMMENDATION #43: Establish an evaluation design and data collection system to measure how well the Probation Department assesses the needs of juveniles and matches them to programs and services.

RECOMMENDATION #44: Provide a forum to address the specific recommendations that DCFS made to improve the START program and the 241.1 process through improvements in the practices and participation of the Probation Department.

RECOMMENDATION #45: Participate more fully in the WRAPAROUND service collaboration. Funding provided by the DCFS will facilitate this participation.

RECOMMENDATION #46: Complete and implement the protocol for designating dual status youth.

RECOMMENDATION #47: Resolve the differences in interpretation regarding the levels of supervision at the Juvenile Halls.

RECOMMENDATION #48: Examine the continuity of treatment services as juveniles move from one point to another in the probation system; identify methods to address the problems with interruptions of treatment and sharing of information.

RECOMMENDATION #49: Investigate the charge that juveniles avoid needed medication so that they can go to a camp of their choice; determine what implications this has for the provision of treatment services at the camps

RECOMMENDATION #50: Utilize all of the information and issues identified by the mental health staff to collaboratively identify issues and gaps in services in preparation for participation in the National Policy Academy and in other interagency meetings for the planning and evaluation of services.

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONS FOR PAPER REVIEW OF DOCUMENTS

Strategies

I.   Do the strategies reflect best practices standards?
II.   Are they evidence-based?
III.   Do they link to operations?
IV.   What are recommendations for improvement?

Policies and Procedures

I.   Do the policies reflect the strategies?

II.   Do the policies reflect best practices standards?

III.   Are they evidence-based?

IV.   Do the policies and procedures reflect stated mission, objectives and values?

V.   Do the policies and procedures reflect the legal mandates?

VI.   Are they clear, adequate, useful, and correct?

VII.   Are they well organized?

VIII. Do the policies and procedures provide adequate decision-making criteria and tools (i.e. specific procedures and practice guidelines) for each case decision point?

IX.   What are recommendations for improvement?

Inter-Agency Coordination Materials

I.   Do the planning documents sufficiently address coordination of decision-making, case management, and service delivery?

II.   Do interagency agreements exist for the most critical entities with whom the probation department must interface?

III.   Are the agreements sufficient as to coordination of decision-making, case management, and service delivery?

IV.   What are recommendations for improvement?

APPENDIX C
LIST OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED

Shirley Alexander, Bureau Chief, Detention Services

Wendy Aron and Joseph Charney, Deputies to Supervisor Yaroslavsky*

Robert Barner, Asst. Superintendent, Los Angeles County Office of Education

Carol Biondi and Jo Kaplan, Advocates for Camp Gonzales, Cyn Yamashiro, Director, Loyola Law School Center for Juvenile Law and Policy*

Sandra Buttitta, Sheila Callahan, James Hickey, LA County District Attorney's Office*

Brian Center, Deputy to Supervisor Molina

Sergeant Scott Chew, Sheriff's Department

Dave Davies, Bureau Chief, Adult Field and Special Services

Carl Gallucci and Anna Pembedjian, Deputies to Supervisors Knabe and Antonovich*

Jitahadi Imara, Bureau Chief, Juvenile Special Services

Ralph Miller, President, Deputy Probation Officers Union, Local 685

Judge Nash, Presiding Judge, Juvenile Court

Winston Peters, Assistant Public Defender

Carol Sanchez, Bureau Chief, Residential Treatment Services (Acting)

David Sanders, Director, Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services

Virginia Snapp, Bureau Chief, Juvenile Field Services

Marvin Southard, Director, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health

Wendy Tait, Deputy to Supervisor Burke

Senior Al Ward, Sheriff's Department

David Wesley, Supervising Judge, Criminal Division, LA Superior Court

*Indicates interviews held jointly, involving more than one person.

APPENDIX D
KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I.   Review key elements of the program audit.

II.   How well do you think probation provides needed services to juveniles/adults through department staff, contractors, and through linkages with other youth/adult serving systems?

III.   What are some of the unmet needs of juveniles/adults that you think might be better served?

IV.   What do you think are the probation department's programmatic strengths? Most promising practices?

V.   Are there any program areas that you think require more attention and evaluation?

VI.   What do you think are the most important issues for the department to address in terms of its mission and operation?

VII.   What do the juveniles/adults find most troublesome about their probation experience?

VIII.   What do the juveniles/adults find most helpful about their probation experience?

IX.   Do you have any particular ideas for solutions to identified concerns or problems the department faces?

X.   How effective is the department in its interaction with other agencies, including your agency or office?

XI.   Are there any other areas of concerns or issues that we have not touched on that you think should be addressed?

APPENDIX E
JUVENILE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

I.   What has been most helpful to you about your probation/camp/hall experience?

       Why?

II.   What has been least helpful to you about your probation/camp/hall experience?

       Why?

III.   What kind of changes in your life do you wish the probation department could help you make?

IV.   How well do you think the probation officer/camp staff/hall staff works with you?

       Describe things the staff does…

V.   What recommendations do you have for improving how the staff works with you?

VI.   Are there any rules or ways that things work in probation that you think should be changed?

VII.   Is there something that would help you get off probation and stay out of trouble that isn't available to you?

APPENDIX F
CONTRACTOR QUESTIONS FOR CBOs/GROUP HOMES

1.   How well do you think the probation department provides needed services to juveniles through its contracts with youth serving agencies/community-based organizations?
                            -requests for proposals
                            -policies and procedures
                            -contract monitoring

2.   When you contract with the department, are their clear expectations as to what client outcomes should be achieved?

3.   What are the desired outcomes for children placed in your program/facility? For what client outcomes do you think you should be held accountable? For what outcomes do you think the department should be held accountable?

4.   How well does the department assess the needs of juveniles and match them to your programs and services?

5.   Please describe the contact you have with probation officers who have juvenile clients in your facility/program.

6.   Are there unmet needs of juveniles that you think could be better served by the department?

7.   In your experience, how well does the contracting process with the department work?

8.   Are there other issues/concerns we have not discussed that you believe merit attention?

Other issues: Follow-up by probation officer, transition in and out of placement, department's standards for treatment of children

**APPENDIX G
LA COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT PROGRAM
AUDIT – CWLA INITIAL REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
FEBRUARY 15, 2005**

I.   Departmental organization chart.

II.   Staff Directory.

I.   Mission, vision, or values statements.

II.   Planning/strategy documents within past 3-5 years.

III.   Policy and procedural manuals.

IV.   Interagency memoranda of understanding, protocols, and working agreements.

V.   List and descriptions of advisory bodies.

VI.   MIS data on program and client outcome or performance.

VII.   Recent (within past 5 years) evaluation reports containing:
         A.   Program outcome or performance data.
         B.   Client outcome or performance data.

VIII.   Descriptions of program initiatives within past 3 years.

IX.   Identification and description of most promising practices.

X.   Client satisfaction data within past 5 years.

XI.   Descriptions of staff training – initial and in-service.

XII.   Assessment tools for case decision-making.

XIII.   Other case management guidelines or tools for decision-making.

XIV.   Process for contracting services.

XV.   List of contract agencies and type of services provided.

XVI.   Employee contracts.

XVII.   Minutes from labor/management meetings.

XVIII.   Employee satisfaction data within past 5 years.

APPENDIX H
LOS ANGELES COUNTY PROBATION PROGRAM AUDIT –
BENCHMARKING AND BEST PRACTICES – CWLA DATA
REQUEST FOR STANDARDS INFORMATION – ADULT AND
JUVENILE
APRIL 21, 2005

I.   Recidivism data collected in the past 5 years.

II.   Survey/polling of internal and external stakeholders/community

III.   Pre-sentence investigation report sample

IV.   Revocation statistics

V.   Violation forms

VI.   Sample Risk/Need Assessment form/instrument

VII.   Additional assessments conducted (i.e. Substance Abuse, Anger Management, Mental Health, Motivation, Bio-psychosocial, Responsivity, etc.) or contracted out for.

VIII.   Sample supervision plan

IX.   Inventory of functioning community agencies/contracts with community agencies

X.   Evaluation criteria for functioning community agencies

XI.   Offender handbook/rules

XII.   Workgroup reports/plans for implementing evidence-based practices

XIII.   Measurements for measuring incremental change while under supervision (in addition to risk reassessment)

XIV.   Outcome measures currently collected and process for using those to make changes.

XV.   Quality assurance program/system for ensuring fidelity

APPENDIX I
SUMMARY OF "WHAT WORKS" FOR DELINQUENCY PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

Source: Greenwood, P. W. (2005) Promising Solutions in Juvenile Justice in Dishion, T. and K. Dodge (eds.) Deviant by Design: Interventions and Policies that Aggregate Deviant Youth, Guilford Press

Source of Evidence

Reviews

MacKenzie (2002)
Review of sentencing and corrections evaluation literature
 Does Work
   Boot camps instead of longer term custody
   Therapeutic communities
Might Work
   Intensive supervision with appropriate services
Does not work
   Intensive supervision/surveillance
   Boot camps instead of probation

Meta-analyses

Andrews et al. (1990)
Meta-analysis of adult and juvenile corrections evaluations
   Focus on higher-risk youth
   Focus on dynamic risk factors associated with crime
   Treatment method appropriate to individual
   Use of proven methods
Lipsey & Wilson (1998)
Meta-analysis of more than 400 programs for juvenile delinquents
   Effective programs produce larger effects in community versus custodial settings.
   Different factors explain success in different settings
   Effective for non-institutional settings
     Duration of treatment
     Researcher involvement
     Interpersonal skills training
     Individual counseling (more effective for the more serious)
     Behavioral programs
   Not effective for non-institutional settings
     Bringing younger delinquents together in groups
     Wilderness challenge, early release from probation or parole, deterrence,
     Vocational training
Lipsey & Wilson (continued)
   Effective for institutional settings
     General program characteristics more important than treatment type
     Integrity of treatment implementation
     Duration of treatment
     Well established programs
     Treatment administered by mental health professionals

Interpersonal skills training (ART)
Teaching family home (Behavior mod, counseling, advocacy)
Not effective for institutional settings
Wilderness challenge
Employment related

(Lipsey and Wilson, 1998)

Rating Systems

Blueprints - (Elliot, 1997)
Functional Family Therapy (FFT) (Alexander et al., 1998)
Multisystemic Therapy (MST) (Henggler et al., 1998)
Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) (Chamberlain, 1998)
Surgeon General – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2001
Effective
FFT, MST, MTFC
Intensive Protective Supervision
Not Effective
DARE
Scared Straight

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2001. Youth Violence: A Report of the Surgeon General. Rockville, MD. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Cost-Effective

WSIPP – (Aos et al., 2001)
FFT, MST, MTFC
Aggression Replacement Training
Adolescent Diversion Project
Diversion with Services
Intensive probation as alternative to incarceration
Boot camps as alternative to longer residential program
Other family based therapy approaches

APPENDIX J
ASSESSMENT OF EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE – ADULT PROBATION

The following is a list of recommendations for implementing these 8 principles based on the research and information provided by Los Angeles County Adult Probation:

A.   Assess actuarial risk and need: Assessment instruments need to assess both static and dynamic risk factors, profile criminogenic needs and be validated on the criminal justice population. There needs to be formal training, quality assurance measures and detailed policies in place to support their ongoing efficacy. The LA County Adult Probation Risk Assessment measures substance abuse, gang involvement and criminal history. The big six criminogenic needs are criminal history (low self control), criminal peers, dysfunctional family, antisocial values and attitudes, antisocial personality and substance abuse. The current assessment has 5 domains for criminal history information, 2 domains for substance abuse and 1 domain for criminal peers. Three out of the 6 criminogenic needs are not addressed. There is a Strength-based Needs Assessment as well but it is not scored and is set up in a check-off format. It is recommended that a validated Risk/Need Assessment be adopted, that is normed to the population and validated with the offender population. The most widely used instrument is the Level of Service Inventory-revised (LSI-r). The LSI-r measures risk, the big 6 criminogenic needs, non-criminogenic needs such as employment and finances and protective factors (strengths). The Los Angeles County Adult Probation department is in the process of transitioning to the LSI-r and hopes to accomplish this by the end of 2005. To make this instrument most effective, cut-off scores for risk levels and classification will need to be normed to the L.A. County Probation population. Research shows, internal and external resources are best spent on the high risk population to make the greatest impact on recidivism.

B.   Enhance intrinsic motivation: Staff need to relate to offenders in sensitive and constructive ways in order to promote behavior changes. The style of communication used to work with offenders and deal with their ambivalence that has been most widely supported by research is motivational interviewing. Staff training along with continued quality assurance of day to day interactions is imperative to promoting a culture based on motivational interviewing strategies. Along with adopting the LSI-r, the L.A. County Adult Probation Department also plans to adopt motivational interviewing by the end of 2005. Training alone will not ensure a culture based on a motivational interviewing style. Staff will need on-going support and shadowing, through strategic quality assurance of taped and live interventions, training boosters and the spirit of motivational interviewing being modeled by administration and supervisors.

C. Target interventions: L.A. County Adult Probation has the organizational systems in place to target the highest risk offenders and some specialized units such as Child Threat and the Gang Unit, but the high-risk caseload is 225 to 1. This caseload makes it impossible to effectively address all of the needs associated with this risk pool and promote permanent behavior change. Targeted case management is only being provided for Child Threat, DV, Gang Unit, Family and Financial.   Internal and external resources should be devoted to the big 6 criminogenic needs and prioritized by the officers as part of case planning. Offenders need to be matched to treatment resources based on their criminogenic needs. Treatment resources need to follow the evidence based practices, with cognitive behavioral interventions based on the big 6 criminogenic needs. These resources need to monitored for integrity of service and provide on-going measurement outcomes as to their effectiveness. Research indicates that 40-70% of high risk offender free time should be occupied with appropriate services (substance abuse treatment, education, employment assistance, etc.). The only external contracts that adult probation currently has include electronic monitoring and lab testing for urinalysis. Without additional probation officers or treatment resources, the adult probation department will not be able to meet the criminogenic needs of clients and effect change. The L.A. County Adult Probation case plan is set up in a check-off format with 30 day and 6 month follow-up. Case planning needs to be a dynamic process reviewed at each meeting with offenders with incremental steps to document on-going progress. Criminogenic needs, non criminogenic needs, protective factors and responsivity factors need to be incorporated and utilized for case planning. Without addressing the current level of Probation staffing, lack of treatment resources and philosophy around case planning and case management, the adoption of the LSI-r will provide little more than a validated assessment instrument that is being used only for limited classification purposes.

D. Skill train with directed practice: Internal resources, as well as external contracts need to be based in cognitive behavioral strategies using evidence-based interventions that have been proven to reduce recidivism. Both existing contracted service providers and future providers need to understand the philosophy of the department and its goals and provide programming that is supported by research. Monitoring by L.A. County Probation needs to include quality assurance methods that look at programming to ensure it meets the department's needs and standards. The lack of treatment resources is a huge gap in impacting recidivism. The criminogenic needs of clients are not being addressed and change cannot happen without addressing this gap. Programs are needed that address substance abuse, anger management, family relations, criminal values and attitudes, gender specific services, criminal peers and mental health issues.

E. Increase positive reinforcement: In order to sustain behavior change, the research shows that positive reinforcement is more effective than negative

reinforcement, especially in the early stages of behavior change. It is important to tell offenders what they are doing right and reinforce positive change. The 4:1 principle states that for every negative reinforcement there needs to be 4 positive reinforcements. These rewards can be applied randomly and appropriately, with clear rules and expectations and a system of graduated consequences. Research supports that when all this is in place, offenders tend to comply in the direction of most rewards and least consequences. Probation staff as well as contracted providers need to adopt this philosophy in their work with the probation population.

F. Engage on-going support in natural communities-L.A. County Probation has some community programs in place such as VISTO and Reserve Duty P.O. and Specialist. Pro-social community ties will reinforce targeted behavior changes. A regular part of case planning needs to incorporate these community supports, using entities such as 12 step groups, religious activities and actively engaging pro-social family, friends and peers.

G. Measure relevant processes and practices: Collect data/track outcome measures regarding assessment, case management, incremental behavior change and staff performance. Use this data to assess department change and for strategic planning purposes. Much of the data currently collected by L.A. County Adult Probation has to do with report quality rather than fidelity of service. Adopting standards such as the APPFS Performance Based Standards would prioritize quality of services, while maintaining quality administrative controls.

H. Provide measurement feedback: Once specific service based outcome measures are in place, feedback needs to be given to all stakeholders, including staff, clients, contracted providers, etc. In order to build accountability, staff performance data needs to be utilized for on-going supervision and performance evaluations. Clients need to receive feedback on assessment instruments and progress through the change process. Contracted providers need to receive monitoring reports and regular feedback on their progress in implementing and delivering evidence-based interventions. The continual process of measuring relevant practices and providing feedback on such measurements builds organizational change, investment and accountability on all levels.

APPENDIX K
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES PROBATION CAMP REVIEW
REPORT OF THE CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA

John Tuell, Director, Core Services for the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) and Project Director for the County of Los Angeles Probation Department Audit Project, and Dave Marsden, CWLA Consultant for the County of Los Angeles Probation Department Audit Project, conducted an on-site visit to observe the operations and review the programming of eight of the nineteen residential camps that comprise the Residential Treatment Services Bureau Camp Program for juvenile offenders for the County of Los Angeles. The 2-day review was conducted on May 17-18, 2005 and is a component of the aforementioned audit of the Los Angeles County Probation Department conducted by CWLA. During the on-site visitation of the eight camps, the CWLA Review Team toured the physical plant and observed the living quarters, educational operations and facilities, dining and recreational areas, shower and hygiene facilities, and the administrative areas and operations. It should be noted that the review was not designed or contemplated as a rigorous examination or comprehensive audit of the RTSB Camp Program. The CWLA Review Team was tasked to observe operations and programming, conduct unscheduled interviews of administrative and managerial staff and camp wards, assess treatment and service provisions, and formulate generalized findings and observations that will contribute to the overall findings of the County of Los Angeles Probation Department Audit Project.

Prior to the on-site visitation of the eight camps, the CWLA Review Team conducted a scheduled meeting on the morning of May 17th with Alex Nieto, Special Assistant, Residential Treatment Services Bureau, at his County of Los Angeles Probation Department office. Mr. Nieto and the Review Team discussed overall camp operations, the role and function of the camps within the juvenile system, and the process for placement in the camps. Mr. Nieto responded to a series of questions that the Review Team had prepared in order to gain a more complete understanding of the services and treatment provisions for wards of the camps. He provided several operational manuals and historical reports that supported the enhanced understanding of the camp operations. Mr. Nieto also arranged a visitation schedule based on his understanding of the purpose of the review that afforded the maximum opportunity to observe camp operations. Upon conclusion of the 2 ½ hour interview/discussion, the Review Team immediately traveled to Camp Paige and Camp Afflerbaugh to conduct on-site reviews.

The review was also supported by the provision of numerous additional documents and reports that were examined by the CWLA Review Team subsequent to the on-site visitation. These documents included:

- RTSB Performance Counts (2001 -2004 performance indicator data).

- Camp Recidivism Report (2001 – 2004).

- New Order Processing Flow Chart.

- CCTP Flow Chart (includes division of work description).

- 15 Camp Assessment and Case Plan Reports.

- April 15, 2004 Internal Memorandum (re: reporting process, requirements with respect to the courts).

- Challenger Memorial Youth Center Special Housing Unit Orientation.

- Out-of-Home Screening Factors & Issues document.

- July 7, 2003 Concerns Memorandum (authored by C. Biondi and J. Kaplan).

- July 1, 2004 Camp Gonzales Pilot Project Meeting Memorandum (authored by C. Biondi and J. Kaplan).

The RTSB Performance Counts reports articulates the goals of the Camps program and identified results sought from ward participants in the residential placements. According to these RTSB reports, the goal is to "aid in reducing the incidence and impact of crime in the community by:

- Providing a residential experience that introduces effective life skills to each ward.

- Reunifying the minor and family.

- Assisting the minor in achieving a productive, crime-free life."

The desired result is detailed as "probation youth meet their obligations to the juvenile court and learn the life skills necessary to successfully reunite with their families and reintegrate into the community."

The review team visited the following camp programs:

- Camp Paige (May 17th)
- Camp Afflerbaugh (May 17th)
- Challenger Memorial Youth Center (CMYC) (May 18th)
    - Camp Jarvis
    - Camp Onizuka
    - Camp McNair
    - Camp Resnick
    - Camp Scobee
    - Camp Smith
    - Special Housing Unit (SHU)

During the course of the on-site visitation, the CWLA Review Team met with numerous staff holding a wide array of professional positions within the camps. These included:

- Superintendent
- Camp Directors
- Deputy Probation Officers (DPO)
- Administrative and security personnel
- Teachers
- Cooks/Kitchen staff
- Treatment staff (Atlantic Recovery Services)
- Special Housing Unit (SHU) manager and staff.

Additionally, on four occasions during the on-site visit, the Review Team met with small groups of camp wards (ranging from 3-12 wards) to discuss various aspects of their placement that included living conditions, treatment/service provisions, staff treatment of wards (including use of restraint), quality of meals, interaction with probation staff, and educational and vocational opportunities.

As previously noted, the RTSB Camp Program is operated by the County of Los Angeles County to provide sentencing and treatment alternatives in mostly medium security environments enclosed by security fencing. There are approximately 1900 youths in residence at this time and each camp holds approximately 100-125 youths. The camps offer similar services and rehabilitation treatment however there is one camp for females, one for special housing (security/discipline), and there is some variation among the camps as to length of determinate sentence and age of client. Wards on psychotropic medication are most often placed in one of the six camps co-located in the Challenger Memorial Youth Center (CMYC) which is located approximately 90 miles northeast of the city of Los Angeles. Four camps have the capacity for confinement to secure rooms (Special Housing Units – SHU) as warranted by staff interventions. However, all camps are primarily designed to house their wards in open barracks-style living quarters. Each camp the Review Team observed was structured with 50-55 wards situated in a cluster on either side of a central control area and staff work station. According to Mr. Nieto, and corroborated by staff during the on-site visits, one (1) of the camps has specialized sports programming, two (2) of the camps have violence reduction programming, one (1) camp specializes in teaching fire-fighting procedures and one (1) specializes in forestry programming. There is no sex offender treatment in the camps as serious sex offending is handled by specialized treatment facilities under contract to the County of Los Angeles or by the state operated California Youth Authority. Wards who commit new offenses or prove to be unmanageable in the camps may be committed by the court to the CYA, however many residents of the camps have been placed in camps on multiple occasions.

General Findings

The RTSB Camp Program has been operational for over 40 years. The camps are operated by the Residential Services Treatment Bureau (RSTB), a division of the County of Los Angeles Probation Department. The camps are highly organized with nearly

identical staffing levels, policy and procedure governing the daily operations. The Policy and Procedure Manual is detailed and thoughtfully laid out with policies presented and numbered in a manner that allows for easy updating or replacement. It was noted that the California Board of Corrections noted deficiencies in the 2003 Audit related to:

- Room Checks
- Segregation
- Use of Physical Restraint
- Access to Legal Services
- Discipline
- Death and Serious Illness or Injury of a Minor While Detained

The deficiencies reported, with the obvious exception of the latter noted instance, were viewed as correctable through minor adjustments and changes to the manual and commitments to increased and improved training opportunities. While the Review Team did not conduct formal interviews to assess implementation of policies and procedures with camp staff during the on-site visit, it was noted in the 2003 Audit that camp staff were not uniformly adhering to existing policy and procedure or were not aware of specific requirements articulated by the current Policy and Procedure Manual. Subsequent to our on-site observations, the Review Team believes that these circumstances may be in part related to camp staffing levels. These levels are inadequate to achieve the stated goals of the RTSB Camp Program.

The camps were observed to be clean, adequately maintained, and attractive in general appearance. The landscaping generally enhanced the architectural features of the utilitarian buildings that are situated within the camps.

The following sections of this report present observations and findings in the areas of treatment and services, education, training, staffing and hiring practices, and plant security within the RTSB Camp Program's observed during the course of this review.

The CWLA Review Team would note that a more comprehensive set of findings and recommendations, utilizing best available operational, staffing, training, and programmatic practices could be more prescriptively provided upon a more rigorous examination/audit of the County of Los Angeles Camp Program.

Treatment Services

Casework duties and responsibilities are divided among all of the Deputy Probation Officers (DPO) that staff the camps. The DPO staff maintain the case file, establish the case plan, and ostensibly meet with the ward regularly to coordinate treatment and services. According to anecdotal reports, the workload is divided unevenly among the DPO staff. It was reported that a majority of DPO staff handle only a few cases while charged with primarily providing security and ward behavior management and monitoring. A minority of DPO staff maintain a caseload of approximately 25 wards and are therefore not as involved in daily activity management.

Actual treatment services are provided by Atlantic Recovery Services (Camp Transition Program) which provides for individual and group sessions (the "Basic Elements" program) and substance abuse services. The operations process provides for coordination of treatment intervention opportunities through the DPO staff. However, there was minimal sense that the treatment effort, with particular note for individualized mental health interventions, is coordinated and integrated into the ward's placement experience. From the body of discussions and informal interviews, it was also evident that family integration is a problematic aspect of the ward's placement. In addition to the anecdotal findings, review of a statistically insignificant number of reintegration case plans revealed that transition or reintegration into his/her home community is frequently uncoordinated and lacks involvement of mandated parties (e.g., parent, field DPO, service providers) to participate in the development of post-release conditions and service provisions. As a footnote, it was noted during discussions with Atlantic Recovery Services staff that literacy efforts are an area of concern and continuing focus for many of the wards.

It was reported to the Review Team that most youth with serious substance abuse, sex offender or mental health needs are provided for in private placements that specialize in those services. However, Los Angeles County camp wards requiring psychotropic medication are generally housed in one of the six camp facilities of the Challenger Memorial Youth Center where certified medical staffing exists to address this special need.

Education

The Review Team repeatedly heard from staff regarding the commitment to the requirement of "300 minutes of education" every school day. As a result, the management of the camp operations provide for this aspect of the daily routine. Anecdotal accounts – from both the staff and wards – reflected concern about the coordination of academic records and plans for the wards. The larger perspective was offered concerning an overall lack of coordination with the Los Angeles County Education (LACOE) that included timely and complete transfer of records and manuscripts. These reported failures led to disconnected education work plans for camp wards. There was also some measure of concern expressed regarding school staff in their exercise of control and judgment in implementation of the educational plan. The Review Team observed the existence of a "handoff mentality" between educators and DPO staff which tends to undermine the opportunity to create a seamless, cooperative effort that connects the educational component to the overall placement experience and goals.

Training

The Review Team was provided information that camp staff are provided 40 hours of training under the "Peace Officer Standards and Training" (POST) program prior to assuming their duties. Ongoing training opportunities subsequent to assumption of duties are not specified and there is an absence of an organized training program for continuing

staff development. Any training that is sought by staff must be authorized as "certified and relevant." In discussions with staff and camp directors, there was not an indication that training was incorporated as a planned and purposeful part of operations. Accordingly, there is no design that ensures camp staff is provided with a comprehensive understanding of the mission and purpose of the camps.

During the numerous on-site interactions with camp staff, there was virtually universal absence of recall regarding restraint/verbal de-escalation training received prior to their assumption of duties. There was no indication of any requirement for recertification in restraint or de-escalation skills. It was reported that physical interventions or restraint practices are still used by staff that rely on long outdated approaches which have been abandoned by the majority of the juvenile justice residential care community. The Review Team would note that this absence of training and ongoing certification undermines the effective operations of the camps. Additionally, while there was no observation of physical restraints or abuses by the Review Team during our on-site visits, the absence of coordinated training and uniform adoption and enforcement of restraint and de-escalation techniques can increase the risk for abuse. As this subject was raised during staff interviews, it was shared with the Review Team that there is discussion of establishing a specialized camp where experienced staff will provide supervision for new staff during the process of classroom training while experiencing on the job training. There are both advantages and disadvantages to this approach.

Camp Directors were queried about their training and the anecdotal responses indicated that their training is largely provided by the agency or local/state training opportunities. The Review Team was surprised to learn that most of these personnel had never during the course of their professional career attended a national conference in which promising approaches, best practices, and evidenced-based strategies within the field of residential based care had been presented. The Review Team would observe that this has engendered a parochial view of camp operations and programming. As a result, the leadership staff had limited knowledge of improvement in practices and treatment approaches that would be replicable within their camp environment and positively serve the RTSB camps and individual wards toward achievement of identified goals.

Hiring/Staff

DPO personnel are required to have four-year Bachelor of Arts or Sciences degrees. The Review Team was informed that many of the new staff hired in the camps are individuals who have been promoted from security positions at the Los Angeles County Juvenile Halls. The Review Team did not have sufficient time to verify the level of compliance for hiring requirements. These DPO staff can subsequently compete to assume DPO positions in the field offices and these movements are considered promotional opportunities. Many camp staff, however, choose to maintain their status at the camps due to "straight 56 hour schedule". This operations aspect, in which staff spend 2-eight hour periods sleeping within the camps, permits immediate availability of additional staff in the case of emergency situations that occur on the premises. Additionally, this schedule allows camp staff four days off per week, reduces commuting, and enhances the

chance that these personnel can reside long distances from their assigned camp in lower cost neighborhoods. This schedule also permits many DPO and camp staff to engage in significant part-time work activities. Proponents of this system of hiring and scheduling can appropriately point to these components as advantageous to the operations of the camp. However, there are some obvious negative aspects of this operational system. The managers/camp directors are hired "from the ranks" and have rarely been exposed to many of the successful and innovative management and treatment advances experienced by other residential systems. Additionally, this method of staff scheduling demonstrates minimal regard for continuity and coordination of treatment and the dynamic issues experienced by the camp wards. It is well-established in existing best practices research for behavior management that the development of healthy and consistent relationships is a key component of youths' ability to effectively manage their own behavior. The current RTSB camp treatment environment is at best fractured in the operational structure that provides the ward with a primary case manager who is present only 2 ½ days during the week.

Security

According to the Review Team's interview with Mr. Nieto of RTSB, most of the camps are secured for razor wire fencing and experience approximately 20–50 escapes per year. The camps can best be described as medium security with the exception of the CMYC, which by design is an enclosed courtyard design with the buildings and the physical plant providing a fundamental barrier to escape. Camp wards deemed to be acting in an aggressive manner and/or demonstrating inappropriate conduct can be transferred to four locked units (Special Housing Units – SHU) that exist within the camp structure. A policy and procedure document that detailed expectations of the camp ward during confinement was provided to the Review Team during our tour of the SHU at the CMYC. A brief interview was also conducted with a ward of the SHU during this portion of the visit. While anecdotal concerns have been articulated regarding the behaviors and process by which wards are placed in SHU confinement, the Review Team did not review records that may substantiate those claims and did not observe conditions that would support those concerns. There are no significant findings to report from this aspect of the camp review.

Summary and Observations

During the on-site visitation of the eight camps, the CWLA Review Team toured the physical plant and observed the living quarters, educational operations and facilities, dining and recreational areas, shower and hygiene facilities, and the administrative areas and operations. It should be noted that the review was not designed or contemplated as a rigorous examination or comprehensive audit of the RTSB Camp Program. The CWLA Review Team was tasked to observe operations and programming, conduct unscheduled interviews of administrative and managerial staff and camp wards, assess treatment and service provisions, and formulate generalized findings and observations that will contribute to the overall findings of the County of Los Angeles Probation Department Audit Project. The CWLA Review Team would suggest that a more comprehensive set

of conclusive recommendations, utilizing best available operational, staffing, training, and programmatic practices could be more prescriptively provided upon a more rigorous examination/audit of the County of Los Angeles Camp Program. It is within this context that the following thematic observations are offered.

The overall RTSB Camp Program was observed by the Review Team as being originally formulated with "state of the art" concepts and practices at its inception - but one that has not been dynamic as improved practices have emerged. There is an ongoing effort to promote uniformity for ease of management control at the expense of creativity, prescriptive, and individualized programming that contributes to achievement of the stated goals of the camp program. The camps the Review Team observed are organized and the operating manual defining operational aspects is strong. However, the Review Team repeatedly observed that the focus on staff tradition and management control took priority over improving efforts to implement coordinated and individualized treatment plans that contributed to achievement of improved outcomes for camp wards upon their release and reintegration into their home community. There is a wealth of existing research and knowledge of effective practices available to guide the RTSB Camps program that would assist in the proactive development and implementation of a well coordinated treatment environment.

The Review Team would note that many of the critical and routine components are present that may accomplish these goals. However, these aspects do not operate in a dynamic way that encourages or allows better involvement of staff and residents in a shared environment of positive change. A current term of art to describe the deficiency is the lack of an "integrated environment." The camps lack a clearly articulated overarching theme and organizational culture that prioritizes the needs of the ward and his/her family and empowers staff members to work collaboratively to achieve the stated goals of the RTSB Camps program. As a result, it was observed that the staff manage and control and the wards manage and count their days.

The RTSB Camp Program could be energized by adopting a greater level of specialization. For example, if a camp was designated to specialize in substance abuse treatment, the staff assigned to that camp facility could initiate planning for implementation of sound treatment approaches designed to ameliorate the conditions that impact that particular problem area. The camp staff could integrate these approaches with the managerial components of the camp regimen and specific staff training would be developed to enhance the outcome focus of the treatment. Program ideas and practices demonstrating positive outcomes from exemplary locations external to California could be explored to extract the best ideas for incorporation into the new treatment program. Additionally, camps could specialize in the developmental needs of older and/or younger residents. A reception, diagnostic, and assessment center (potentially modeled after the approach utilized in the Commonwealth of Virginia), reportedly under consideration, could be established to ensure that specialized needs of these distinct populations are identified and that camp placements and coordinated treatment plans are assigned based on this criterion. Assignment by geographical considerations could be considered to more effectively integrate camp wards, families, field probation staff, and home

communities which provide opportunities to develop and implement treatment and case plans that lead to improved re-integration.   The Review Team was not able to study the actual geographic distribution of wards to offer conclusive findings regarding the impact of placement location on parental participation and involvement of field DPOs. However, anecdotal observations suggested that placements resulting in long distances from the wards' home community often preclude the aforementioned persons (i.e. families, field DPOs, etc.) from actively participating in the treatment and reintegration process.

Conclusions

The County of Los Angeles RTSB Camp Program is providing an adequate response to the need for an intermediate sanction alternative to probation in the community or incarceration in the California Youth Authority (CYA). However, it is obvious to this Review Team that the Camp Program is not providing an integrated treatment environment that is sufficiently contributing to the goals of the RTSB Camp Program, which include: providing a residential experience that introduces effective life skills to each ward, reunifying the minor and family, and assisting the minor in achieving a productive, crime free life. With no fundamental change in operations or programming, the camps can continue to provide a satisfactory response to the needs of the court to hold delinquent offenders accountable in a reasonably safe and secure environment.

It is the opinion of the CWLA Review Team that an improved alternative would include an enhancement of staffing levels to meet the basic requirements necessary to operate the programs. This commitment would permit a greater emphasis on achieving an integrated treatment environment that is formulated to meet the unique and individualized needs of each ward. The available research and best practice literature suggest that this effort would improve reintegration outcomes. Additionally, it is the opinion of the Review Team that enhanced levels of staffing should be combined with more rigorous screening, diagnostic evaluation, and assessment for specialized needs that result in assignment of wards to camps established to impact specialized treatment conditions. As previously noted, camps could use national models to construct an improved and integrated individualized treatment environment, while maintaining the critical components of management and population control, and specialize in treatment and focus areas that might include: substance abuse, mental health, family reintegration, violence and aggression reduction, transition to independence, vocational training, gender specific/responsive, sex offender treatment, and developmentally delayed offender treatment.

The CWLA Review Team would suggest that the RTSB Camp Program needs to be critically examined and revitalized after decades of service to the Los Angeles county community. The treatment needs of youthful offenders have changed and these Los Angeles county youth need to be equipped with the skills and capacities to succeed in a changing environment and achieve the stated goals of the RTSB Camp Program.

APPENDIX L
REVIEW OF APPFS STANDARDS

The following is a review of the outcome measures outlined in the APPFS Performance
Standards and a review of documentation/outcome measures provided by LA County
Adult Probation:

1.A. Members of the community are protected from harm.

APPFS Outcome Measure	L.A. County Adult Probation Documentation
Number of offenders who were not arrested for a felony offense in the past 12 months divided by the number of active cases in the past 12 months.	Currently measured
Number of offenders who were not arrested for a misdemeanor offense in the past 12 months divided by the number of active cases in the past 12 months.	Currently measured
Number of offenders who were not convicted of a felony offense in the past 12 months divided by the number of active cases in the past 12 months.	Currently measured
Number of offenders who were not convicted of a misdemeanor offense in the past 12 months divided by the number of active cases in the past 12 months.	Currently measured
Number of offenders who completed their supervision in the 12 months without any new arrests or convictions divided by the number of offenders who completed supervision in the past 12 months.	Currently measured
Number of offenders released in the past 12 months who were not arrested for a new felony offense during the first 12 months following termination of supervision divided by the number of offenders released in the past 12 months.	Not currently measured
Number of offenders released in the past 12 months who were not convicted of a new felony offense during the first 12 months following termination of supervision divided by the number of offenders released in the past 12 months.	Not currently measured
Number of offenders released in the past 12 months who were not arrested for a new misdemeanor offense during the first 12 months following termination of supervision divided by the number of offenders released in the past 12 months.	Not currently measured
Number of offenders released in the past 12 months who were not convicted of a new misdemeanor offense during the first 12 months following termination of supervision divided by the number of offenders released in the past 12 months.	Not currently measured
Community members' perceptions of protection from harm from current offenders (from survey/polling).	Not currently conducted

Community members' perceptions of protection from harm from former offenders (from survey/polling).	Not currently conducted

1.B. The Community is actively engaged in crime prevention.

APPFS Outcome Measure	L.A. County Adult Probation Documentation
Community knowledge of the CJ system as measured in polls/surveys in the past 12 months divided by the survey/poll results from the previous 12 month period.	Not currently conducted
Community attitudes toward the CJ system as measured in polls/surveys in the past 12 months divided by the survey/poll results from the previous 12 month period.	Not currently conducted
Community confidence in the CJ system as measured in polls/surveys in the past 12 months divided by the survey/poll results from the previous 12 month period.	Not currently conducted
Victimization rates for the jurisdiction for the past 12 months divided by the victimization rates for the previous 12 period.	Measuring victim information

1.C. Sentencing and Release recommendations promote protection of the public and lawful offender behavior.

APPFS Outcome Measure	L.A. County Adult Probation Documentation
Number of offenders who absconded in the past 12 months divided by the number of offenders who were under supervision in the past 12 months.	Currently measured
Number of offenders who absconded during the past 12 months who were recommended for supervision by the agency divided by the number of offenders who were under supervision in the past 12 months.	Currently measured
Number of cases in which agency recommendations were adopted in the past 12 months divided by the number of cases for which recommendations were offered in the past 12 months.	Currently measured

1.D. The agency is a responsible member of the community.

APPFS Outcome Measure	L.A. County Adult Probation Documentation
Number of individual volunteers who provided services in the past 12 months divided by the average number of fulltime equivalent staff employed by the agency in the past 12 months.	HR Function currently measured as reported by the Probation Department
Total number of volunteer hours delivered in the past 12 months divided by the average number of fulltime equivalent staff employed by the agency in the past 12 months.	HR Function currently measured as reported by the Probation Department
Total number of community service delivered by offenders in the past 12 months.	Currently measured-through PAWS
Total number of hours of community service delivered by offenders in the past 12 months divided by the average number of offenders supervised in the past 12 months.	Currently measured-through PAWS
Number of community entities on which agency staff served in the past 12 months.	Found in strategic plan documents
Number of positive media items about the agency 12 months divided by the total number of media items about the agency in the past 12 months.	Currently Tracked
Number of presentations provided to the community in the past 12 months.	Currently Tracked
Number of complaints about offenders received from the community in the past 12 months.	Currently Tracked
Number of complaints about offenders received from the community in the past 12 months that were substantiated divided by the number of complaints about offenders received from the community in the past 12 months.	Currently Tracked

2.A. Offenders behave lawfully while under the supervision of the agency.

APPFS Outcome Measure	L.A. County Adult Probation Documentation
Number of times offenders were found to have possessed illegal items or contraband during the past 12 months divided by the average agency caseload in the past 12 months.	The Probation Department reports it currently collects this information but does not review or utilize it for any reports or future planning.
Number of offenders who successfully completed supervision in the past 12 months divided by the number of offenders who completed supervision in the past 12 months.	Currently measured

2.B. Offenders comply with conditions ordered by the sentencing court or releasing authority.

APPFS Outcome Measure	L.A. County Adult Probation Documentation
Number of rule violations found in the past 12 months divided by the average agency caseload in the past 12 months.	The Probation Department reports it currently collects this information but does not review or utilize it for any reports or future planning
Number of violations of conditions found in the past 12 months divided by the average agency caseload in the past 12 months.	The Probation Department reports it currently collects this information but does not review or utilize it for any reports or future planning
Number of rule violations found to have occurred in the past 12 months divided by the number of rule violations alleged in the past 12 months.	The Probation Department reports it currently collects this information but does not review or utilize it for any reports or future planning
Number of violations of conditions found to have occurred in the past 12 months divided by the number of violations of conditions alleged in the past 12 months.	The Probation Department reports it currently collects this information but does not review or utilize it for any reports or future planning

2.C. Offenders maintain good health.

No outcome measures with APPFS standards.
L.A. County Probation does outcome measures on orientation completed and has policies re: providing offenders with health information.

2.D. Offenders are successful in the community during their sentences and after discharge.

APPFS Outcome Measure	L.A. County Adult Probation Documentation
Number of offenders who were employed while under supervision in the past 12 months divided by the average agency caseload.	The Probation Department reports it currently collects this information but does not review or utilize it for any reports or future planning
Number of offenders who were employed upon discharge in the past 12 months divided by the number of offenders discharged in the past 12 months.	Not currently measured
Number of offender substance abuse tests for which the results were negative in the past 12 months divided by the number of tests administered in the past 12 months.	The Probation Department reports it currently collects this information but does not review or utilize it for any reports or future planning
Total number of offenders who successfully completed supervision in the past 12 months divided by the number of offenders who left supervision in the past 12 months.	Currently measured
Number of offenders who showed improvement as measured by the objective assessment instrument prior to release in the past 12 months divided by the average agency caseload in the past 12 months.	Currently measured for specialized caseloads as reported by the Probation Department
Number of offenders discharged in the past 12 months who are employed for 6 months after release divided by the number of offenders discharged in the past 12 months.	Not currently measured
Number of offenders discharged in the past 12 months who continue substance abuse treatment for six months after release divided by the number of offenders discharged in the past 12 months.	Not currently measured
Number of offenders discharged in the past 12 months who support themselves for 6 months following their release divided by the number of offenders discharge din the past 12 months.	Not currently measured
Number of offenders discharged in the past 12 months who are convicted or adjudicated for a felony crime within 6 months after release divided by the number of offenders discharged in the past 12 months.	Not currently measured
Number of offenders discharged in the past 12 months who are convicted or adjudicated for a misdemeanor crime within 6 months after release divided by the number of offenders discharged in the past 12 months.	Not currently measured

2.E. Offenders comply with all conditions of the court or releasing authority.

APPFS Outcome Measure	L.A. County Adult Probation Documentation
Number of victims re-victimized by the same offender during the past 12 months divided by the average number of offenders under supervision in the past 12 months.	Monitored individually- The Probation Department reports it currently collects this information but does not review or utilize it for any reports or future planning
Number offenders who violated special condition orders "to stay away from" or "no contact with" or "no violence towards" during the past 12 months divided by the average number of offenders under supervision in the past 12 months.	Monitored individually- The Probation Department reports it currently collects this information but does not review or utilize it for any reports or future planning
Number of offenders who paid ordered restitution in full in the past 12 months divided by the number of offenders who were under orders to pay restitution in the past 12 months.	Collections measured and non-payment reported to court
Number of offenders whose cases were closed with partial payment of restitution in the past 12 months divided by the number of offenders who were under orders to pay restitution in the past 12 months.	Collections measured and non-payment reported to court
Number of offenders whose cases were closed with no restitution payments made in the past 12 months divided by the number of offenders who were under orders to pay restitution in the past 12 months.	Collections measured and non-payment reported to court per Probation

2.F. Offenders take responsibility for their actions.

APPFS Outcome Measure	L.A. County Adult Probation Documentation
Number of offenders discharged in the past 12 months who made regular payments toward their restitution obligations divided by the number of offenders who has restitution obligations.	Collections measured and non-payment reported to court per Probation
Number of offenders who satisfy their court costs/fines obligations in the past 12 months divided by the number of offenders who had court cost/fine obligations in the past 12 months.	Collections measured and non-payment reported to court per Probation
Total amount of restitution paid by offenders in the past 12 months divided by the average agency caseload for the past 12 months.	Collections measured and non-payment reported to court Per Probation
Total number of community service hours donated by offenders in the past 12 months divided by the average agency caseload for the past 12 months.	Currently measured-PAWS
Total number of offenders who participated in restitution in the past 12 months divided by the average agency caseload for the past 12 months.	The Probation Department reports it currently collects this information but does not review or utilize it for any reports or future planning
Total number of offenders who participated in community service work in the past 12 months divided by the average agency caseload for the past 12 months.	The Probation Department reports it currently collects this information but does not review or utilize it for any reports or future planning
Total number of offenders who participated in victim awareness programs in the past 12 months divided by the average agency caseload for the past 12months.	Not currently measured and no victim awareness classes available
Total amount of restitution paid by offenders in the past 12 months divided by the average agency caseload for the past 12 months.	Collections measured as reported by the Probation Department
Total number of hours delivered by offenders who participated in community service work in the past 12 months divided by the average agency caseload for the past 12 months.	Currently measured-through PAWS

2.G. Offenders are treated fairly.

APPFS Outcome Measure	L.A. County Adult Probation Documentation
Number of offender grievances regarding discrimination in the past 12months divided by the average agency caseload.	Currently measured by Management Services as reported by the Probation Department
Number of offender grievances regarding discrimination resolved in favor of offenders in the past 12months divided by the total number of offender grievances filed regarding discrimination in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by Management Services as reported by the Probation Department
Number of grievances resolved in favor of offenders in the past 12 months divided by the average agency caseload for the past 12 months.	Currently measured by Management Services as reported by the Probation Department
Number of grievances resolved in favor of offenders in the past 12 months divided by the total number of grievances filed in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by Management Services as reported by the Probation Department
Number of lawsuits filed against the agency by offenders in the past 12 months divided by the average agency caseload in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by Management Services as reported by the Probation Department
Number of offender lawsuits that were resolved in favor of the agency in the past 12 months divided by the number of offender lawsuits resolved in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by Management Services as reported by the Probation Department
Number of formal offender violation of probation decisions that were appealed in the past 12 months divided by the total number of decisions made in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by Management Services as reported by the Probation Department
Number of appealed violation of probation decisions decided in favor of the offender in the past 12 months divided by the total number of decisions made in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by Management Services as reported by the Probation Department
Number of offender grievances in the past 12 months divided by the average agency caseload for the past 12 months.	Currently measured by Management Services as reported by the Probation Department
Number of offender grievances resolved in favor of offenders in the past 12 months divided by the total number of offender grievances filed in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by Management Services as reported by the Probation Department

3.A. Staff, contractors, interns and volunteers perform duties properly.

APPFS Outcome Measure	L.A. County Adult Probation Documentation
Number of grievances against staff alleging improper conduct that were upheld or found invalid in the past 12 months divided by the average agency caseload in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department
Number of grievances against staff alleging improper conduct that were upheld or found invalid in the past 12 months divided by the number of grievances alleging improper staff conduct filed in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department
Number of court decisions that found staff had acted improperly in the past 12 months divided by the average agency caseload.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department
Number of court decisions that found staff had acted improperly in the past 12 months divided by number of court decisions about staff decided in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department
Number of administrative decisions finding that staff acted improperly in the past 12 months divided by the average agency caseload for the past 12 months.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department

APPFS Outcome Measure	L.A. County Adult Probation Documentation
Number of professional development events attended by professional staff in the past 12 months divided by the number of full-time equivalent professional staff positions in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department

3.B. Staff, contractors, interns and volunteers are protected from harm.

APPFS Outcome Measure	L.A. County Adult Probation Documentation
Number of serious injuries to staff in the past 12 months divided by the average number of full-time equivalent staff in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department

3.C. Staff, contractors, interns and volunteers are professional, ethical and accountable.

APPFS Outcome Measure	L.A. County Adult Probation Documentation
Number of incidents in which staff was found to have acted in violation of agency policy in the past 12 months divided by the number of full-time equivalent staff positions in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department
Number of staff terminated for conduct violations in the past 12 months divided by the number of equivalent staff positions in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department
Number of offender grievances attributed to improper staff conduct that were upheld in the past 12 months divided by the number of offender grievances alleging improper staff conduct filed in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department
Number of offender grievances attributed to improper staff conduct that were determined to be unfounded in the past 12 months divided by the number of offender grievances attributed to improper staff conduct filed in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department
Number of staff, contractor, intern and volunteer substance abuse tests passed in the past 12 months divided by the number of substance abuse tests administered in the past 12 months.	No urine testing except for drivers as reported by the Probation Department

3.D. The agency is administered efficiently and responsibly.

APPFS Outcome Measure	L.A. County Adult Probation Documentation
Number of material audit findings by an independent financial auditor at the conclusion of the last audit.	Currently measured
Number of objectives achieved in the past 12 months divided by the number of objectives established for the past 12 months.	In strategic planning documents

3.E. Staff, contractors, interns and volunteers are treated fairly.

APPFS Outcome Measure	L.A. County Adult Probation Documentation
Number of grievances filed by staff in the past 12 months divided by the number of full-time equivalent staff positions in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department
Number of staff grievances found in favor of staff in the past 12 months divided by the total number of grievances in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department
Total number of years of staff members experience in the field as of the end of the last calendar year divided by the number of staff at the end of the last calendar year.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department
Number of staff termination or demotion hearings in which the agency decision was upheld in the past 12 months divided by the number of staff termination or demotion hearings requested in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department
Number of staff who left employment for any reason in the past 12 months divided by the average number of full-time equivalent staff positions in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department

3.F. A safe and secure setting is provided for staff, contractors, interns and volunteers.

APPFS Outcome Measure	L.A. County Adult Probation Documentation
Number of injuries resulting from fire requiring medical attention in the past 12 months divided by the average full-time equivalent staff in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department
Number of fires that resulted in property damage in the past 12 months divided by the average full-time equivalent staff in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department
Amount of property damage from fire in the past 12 months divided by the average full-time equivalent staff in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department
Number of code violations in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by Safety Officer as reported by the Probation Department
Number of code violations cited in the past 12 months divided by the average full-time equivalent staff in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by Safety Officer as reported by the Probation Department

3.G. Staff, contractors, interns and volunteers are protected from harm. Physical force is used only in instances of self-protection, protection of the offender or others, and the prevention of property damage.

APPFS Outcome Measure	L.A. County Adult Probation Documentation
Number of grievances against staff alleging improper use of force upheld or found invalid in the past 12 months divided by the average agency caseload for the past 12 months.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department
Number of grievances against staff alleging improper use of force upheld or found valid in the past 12 months divided by the number of grievances alleging improper use of force filed in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department
Number of court decisions against staff alleging improper use of force upheld or found invalid in the past 12 months divided by the average agency caseload for the past 12 months.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department
Number of court decisions that found staff had used improper use of force in the past 12 months divided by the number of court decisions alleging improper use of force filed in the past 12 months.	Currently measured by HR
Number of administrative decisions finding that staff used improper force in the past 12 months divided by the average agency caseload for the past 12 months.	Currently measured by HR
Number of injuries that required medical attention resulting from staff use of force in the past 12 months divided by the average caseload for the past 12 months.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department

3.H. Agency vehicles are maintained and operated in a manner that prevents harm to the community, staff and offenders.

APPFS Outcome Measure	L.A. County Adult Probation Documentation
Number of accidents resulting in property damage in the past 12 months divided by the total number of miles driven in the past 12 months unless otherwise noted.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department
Number of accidents resulting in injuries requiring medical treatment for any party in the past 12 months divided by the total number of miles driven in the past 12 months unless otherwise noted.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department
Amount of damage from vehicle accidents in the past 12 months divided by the total number of miles driven unless otherwise noted.	Currently measured by HR as reported by the Probation Department

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